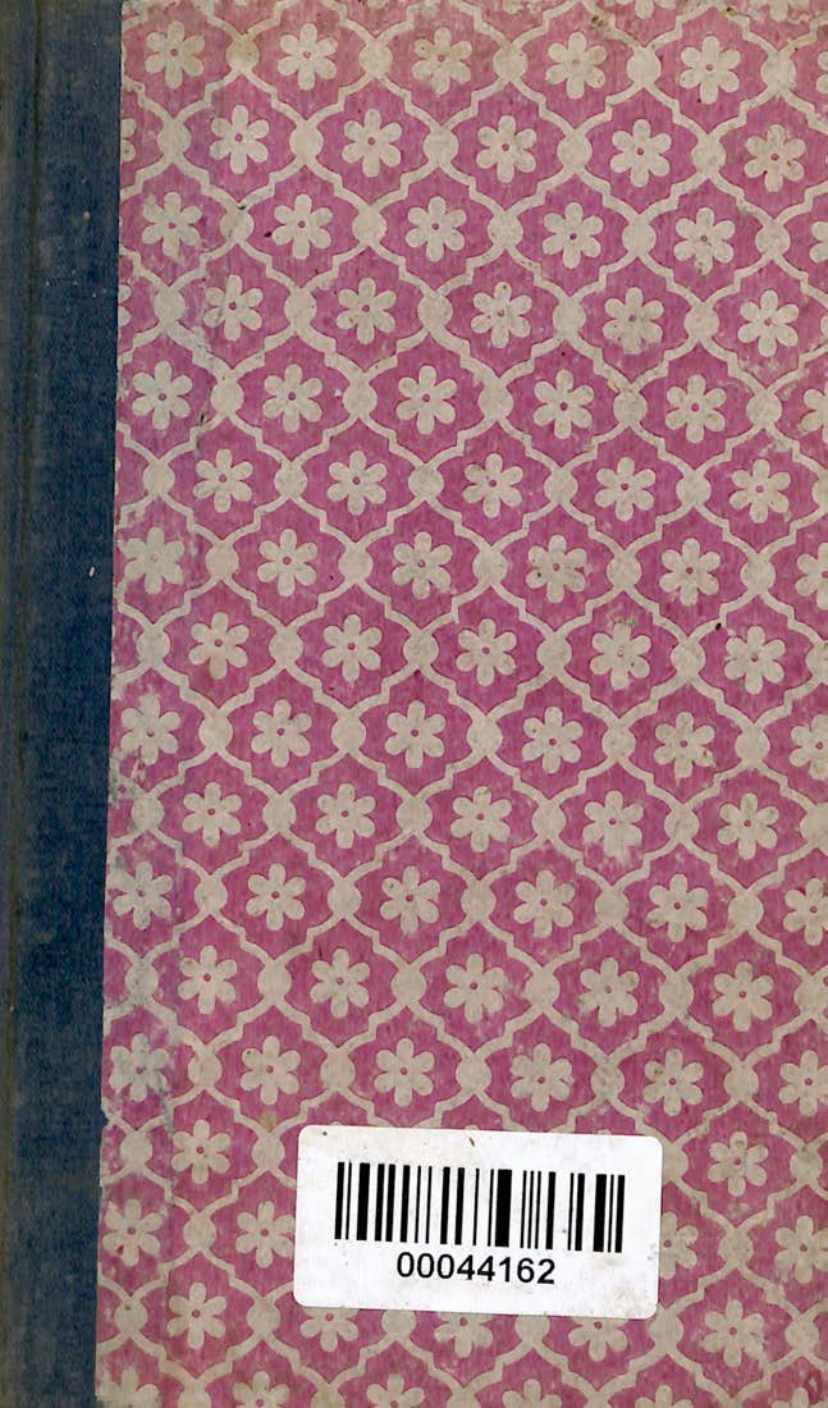
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THE

REPUBLIC OF FOOLS

BEING

THE HISTORY

OF THE

STATE AND PEOPLE OF ABDERA,

IN THRACE.

Translated from the German of C. M. von Wieland,

BY

HENRY CHRISTMAS, M.A., F.R.S.,

ETC., ETC., ETC.

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THE REPUBLIC OF FOOLS.

BOOK IV.

THE LITIGATION CONCERNING THE ASS'S SHADOW.

CHAPTER I.

Cause of the law-suit.

The fatal period of Abdera appears at last to have arrived. Scarcely had they recovered from the extraordinary theatrical fever which the "Cupid, prince of gods and men," of the purc-minded and inoffensive Euripides had excited,—scarcely had the citizens leisure again to converse with each other in prose in the streets,—scarcely had they recommenced the sale of spices, helle-bore, defensive arms, foils, and carving-knives,—scarcely had the Abderite women renewed their work of purple texture,—scarcely had the towns-men flung away their miserable shepherds' reeds, and applied themselves (in their usual zealous

way) to their various occupations and professional pursuits, in better plight than ever,—when the Fates, spinning their sacred web, prepared out of the thinnest, most worthless, and most useless material, such an accursed robe to clothe the glory of Abdera withal, that the like never was seen since the history of man began to be recorded.

Such an abominable mixture of adventures, bargains, law-suits, insurrections, inflammations, cabals, parties, and other unreasonable contrivances, fill the page, and all so complicated by the aid of partisans, opponents, helpers, and promoters, that we may henceforward look only for the sad narrative of a decaying republic.

The mischief began, as great events very often do, from a very slight occasion. There was a certain dentist, named Struthion, by birth and parentage a Megarean, who had been for many years settled in Abdera, and as he was, in the whole country, the only member of the profession, his practice ran over a considerable part of Southern Thrace. His usual mode of laying the country under contribution was to attend all the fairs and markets within a circuit of some thirty miles, where he sold not only tooth-powders and brushes, but also various

nostrums against hysterical affections, hypochondriacal vapours, asthma, rheumatism, &c., at a reasonable profit. For these little excursions he kept but one ass in his stable, which, on setting out, was always heavily laden, first with the dentist's own short, thick, and clumsy person, and secondly with a large wallet strapped behind him full of quack remedies, provisions for the road, and a few trifles appertaining to his toilette.

Now it happened that on one occasion, just as our dentist was about to visit Gerania, the donkey cast a foal, and was therefore in no condition to take the usual journey. Struthion, in consequence, hired another to take him so far as his resting-place for the first night, and the owner of the substituted donkey followed on foot to bring his beast safe back again. The way lay through a tedious expanse of heath and open country, and it being the height of summer the heat was intense—in truth, it was so insupportable, that the poor dentist sighed for the shade, where he might repose and for a time enjoy the fresh breeze, and obtain a little water; but, far and wide, no prospect of such luxury could be seen. Vainly did he look around for trees, shade, or water. At last, quite

worn out, and parched with thirst, he bethought himself of dismounting, and lay down accordingly in the shadow of the ass.

"Now, sir," said the donkey-driver, "what are you doing?"

"I am sitting a little in the shade," said Struthion, "for the heat is insupportable."

"No! no! my good sir, that is no part of our bargain! You only hired the ass, and not its shadow—not one word was said about that."

"Why," replied the dentist, smiling, "I only sat myself down for a moment in the shade, because the sunbeams almost split my head, and every one knows that the shadow goes with the ass."

"But, by Jason!" exclaimed the driver, fiercely, "that is not what I understood;—the ass is one thing, the shadow another. You hired the ass at so much a day, and had you wished for the shadow also, you should have said so. In a word, sir, get up, and agree to pay me what is reasonable for the use of the shadow, or go on with your journey."

"What!" said the dentist, jeeringly; "I have paid you for the ass, and must I pay you for its shadow? Call me a double-distilled donkey myself, if I do anything of the kind! The

animal is decidedly mine for the whole day, and I will sit in its shadow as often as I wish, and remain there as long as I like, that you may depend upon!"

"Is that really your determination?" said the other, with all the coolness of a Thracian donkey-driver.

"It is truly so," answered Struthion, looking at him earnestly.

"Get up, I say, then!" cried the master, "and return at once to Abdera, where you shall soon learn who is right! So may the God of Gardens be good to me and my ass, as I stand up for our rights! You shall see if you are to cheat me out of the shadow without paying me for it!"

The dentist was greatly disposed to let his antagonist feel the justice of his cause through the strength of his arm; he clenched his fists, he raised his hand, and looking closely at his rough antagonist, he—let it fall again, and determined to try milder measures. But as the Thracian stood out for the hire of the shadow, and as the dentist was equally resolved not to pay him, there remained no other means than to go back to Abdera, and to lay the matter before the police-magistrate.

CHAPTER II.

Proceedings before the city magistrate.

The city magistrate Philippides, before whom all questions of this nature were brought in the first instance, was a man of many admirable qualities, honourable, moderate, industrious, and of sound judgment. He always listened to litigants with the greatest attention, and gave the best counsel on both sides; in fact, he was, according to common report, irreproachable. Besides all this, he was a good musician, a practical naturalist, and a clever dramatist. He had composed a play which had, according to the custom of the country, been extremely applauded, and in such high estimation was he held, that it seemed probable, at the first vacancy, he would become nomophylax himself. The worthy Philippides had, however, one small fault, which was, that whenever two parties went before him to prefer a complaint, the one who

spoke last seemed to him always to be in the right. The Abderites were not stupid enough for this failing to escape them; but they thought it only reasonable to pardon one defect in a man who had so many good qualities. Indeed, they often said that, were it not for this failing, Philippides would be the best police-magistrate that Abdera ever boasted. Meantime, the very fact that both parties appeared to him to be in the right, had this good result; he was always disposed to reconcile those who brought their cases before him, and thus the simplicity of the excellent Philippides would have been a real blessing to Abdera had it not been for the watchfulness of the sycophants, who were but ill satisfied with his peace-making propensities, and they, in almost every case, contrived to render his endeavours nugatory.

The dentist Struthion, and the ass-driver Anthrax, both ran breathlessly to lay their complaint before this worthy magistrate. He heard both sides with his usual patience, and when all had been urged, and the wranglers themselves were exhausted, he shrugged his shoulders and declared that he had never heard so intricate a case before, saying to the men, "Pray, which of you is the actual complainant?"

"I am," said Struthion, "for that fellow" (pointing to Anthrax) "has broken his contract."

"And I," said the latter, "have just reason to complain of the dentist for refusing to compensate me for a portion of my property which he monopolized without my consent; I only let him the ass, and not its shadow."

"Truly," said the judge, smiling, "here are two plaintiffs, but no defendant,—a most extraordinary suit. State the matter to me once more, gentlemen, if you please, and with all its circumstances; speak one at a time, or it will be impossible for me to make either head or tail of it."

"Honourable my lord judge," said the dentist, "I hired the ass for one day's use. It is true no mention was made of the shadow; but who ever heard of a separate charge being made for that? By Hercules! this is surely not the first ass that has been hired in Abdera."

"The dentist speaks truly," said the magistrate.

"Indeed I do, sir," vociferated Struthion loudly, "and the ass and its shadow go together; and why should not he who hires one have the full enjoyment of the other? The shadow is an accessory."

"That is clear," observed the judge.

"And I," said the proprietor, "am only a common man who understands nothing of your *aries* and *ories;* but this I do know, that I have my five senses, and they tell me that I am not to let my donkey be kept standing all day in the sun while this man lies down in the shadow. I," continued he, "let the gentleman my ass, for which he paid me half in advance—that I acknowledge; but the ass is one thing, and the shadow another."

"True, also," murmured the judge.

"Now, will he agree to pay half as much for it as for the ass? He ought to do so, sir," said the driver, "and I hope you will help me to what is my due."

"The best conclusion, my friends, that I can arrive at," said Philippides, "is for you both to shake hands, go to your respective homes, and trouble yourselves no more about such profound nonsense. You, Anthrax, as an honest man, forget the ass-shadow, for you cannot be so short-witted as not to know that the shadow goes with the substance; and you, Struthion, suppose you give him a trifle to send him off satisfied?"

"Not I," answered the dentist; "I would not

give him the fourth part of an obolus. I demand my right."

"And I," cried his opponent, "also stand up for mine, for if the ass is my own, surely so is its shadow, and I can use or dispose of them both as I choose; and as you will hear nothing of right or equity, my demand is now for twice as much, and I am resolved to see whether or not justice is to be found in Abdera."

The judge, in great perplexity and anxiety, and not knowing how to gain time, called out, "Where is the ass?"

"At the gate, sir," said the owner.

"Fetch him into the courtyard, then," said Philippides. The owner heard this command joyfully, as he thought it was favourable to his cause that the judge wished to see the principal party in the affair. The donkey was accordingly introduced, and it was a pity that he could not speak his mind in the case; but he stood passively, looking quietly around, and then pricking up his ears first at both the litigants then regarding his master with more attention, then making a motion with his mouth, and again dropping his ears without a single bray.

"There, honoured sir," said Anthrax, "say now if the shadow of so noble an animal, between friends, is not worth a couple of drachmas, at least on so sultry a day as the present."

"Come, come," said Philippides, "let us end this foolish affair." So mild and persuasive were his remonstrances, that both the complainants were on the point of giving in, when unluckily two of the most cunning sycophants in Abdera, Physignathus and Polyphonus, made their appearance, and, after informing themselves of the nature of the affair from the ass-driver, soon succeeded in giving a different complexion to the business.

"Mr. Struthion is perfectly in the right," said Physignathus, who knew the dentist to be a tolerably rich, but a very irritable and obstinate man. The other parasite, rather annoyed that his partner in the trade had forestalled him, cast a side glance at the ass, and, after pronouncing it to be a fine, well-formed animal, spoke up most energetically for its master.

Neither party now desired to hear any more of the peaceable suggestions of the good Philippides, who perceived with regret that another investigation of this unimportant but tedious

case must be commenced. Consequently each man went home to confer with his friend; but the ass, accompanied by its shadow, the cause of the litigation, was driven to the common stable of Abdera, there to await the termination of the business.

CHAPTER III.

How both parties removed the matter in dispute before a higher tribunal.

ALL disputes concerning money or property among the common people of Abdera, were investigated and decided on by a committee of twenty jurymen, who assembled three times a week in the portico of the temple of Nemesis. Everything before this court was conducted in writing, with a due regard to the interests of the sycophants; and as Abderite justice proceeded very much in the spiral direction, at a snail's pace, and almost as rapidly as a snail's gallop, and as no restriction was put on the length of the pleadings, but the sycophants went on till they had nothing more to say, the papers were generally as lengthy as the means of the litigants seemed likely to pay for. Fortunately there seemed many circumstances

which together made it probable that this case would be speedily decided; and hence it is not so much to be wondered at that in less than four months the matter was so far advanced that a decision was rather confidently expected on the next hearing. A judicial investigation respecting an ass's shadow would doubtless be an amusing topic anywhere: imagine, then, how interesting in Abdera. Scarcely was it announced, when everybody caught the subject, and talked of nothing else. All social matters gave way to it, and the interest felt was the same as if every citizen had his whole fortune suspended on the issue.

Some declared themselves in favour of the dentist, others for the ass-driver, and even the donkey himself had *his* partisans, who considered that the animal ought to be permitted to plead by his next friend, since he was himself the most aggrieved party through the use made of his shadow by the dentist while he stood scorching in the sun. The fact was, the said ass had cast his shadow over Abdera: the matter excited as much interest as if the prosperity of the commonwealth depended upon it; and these vicissitudes can astonish no one who has by means of the foregoing

pages made himself acquainted with the Abderites and their mode of action. Yet as there are some readers who are never satisfied unless they are made acquainted with even the slightest causes which have led to great events, we shall be doing to such students of history an agreeable service, if we somewhat more circumstantially relate how it came about that a law-suit between two extremely insignificant persons, and for an object of the most unimportant character, did in no very remote degree conduce to the destruction of the republic itself.

The commonalty of Abdera was, like that of most other States, divided into guilds, and, by reason of an old observance, Struthion belonged to the guild of cordwainers. The observance in question was, like most Abderite observances, grounded on an extremely far-fetched logic. In the early days of the republic this fraternity embraced only shoemakers and cobblers, but after a time the term cobbler began to be understood in an enlarged sense, and thus, at last, physicians, and all who practised any branch of the medical profession, were included in it, as being, in point of fact, "*cobblers of men.*"

In consequence of this arrangement, Struthion had on his side the whole cordwainers' company, the physicians alone excepted, with whom he was always on the very worst of terms, and these, as will be remembered, made a very considerable part of the population of Abdera. To the heads of his company the dentist naturally looked for favour, and above all to the head of the guild, the distinguished Mr. Awl, whose patriotic zeal can be unknown to none who have read these pages. This gentleman declared himself with his accustomed warmth on the side of Struthion, and openly averred that he would rather stab himself to the heart with the instrument of his trade, and from which he derived his name, than allow the rights and privileges of Abdera to be violated in the person of one of his own guild.

"Equity," he said, "is the first principle of law, and what can be more reasonable than this, that he who plants a tree, although he plants it for the sake of its fruit, should enjoy the exclusive use of the shadow also? and how can that which holds good of a tree fail when the principle comes to be applied to an ass? What the plague would become of our freedom, should any citizen of Abdera not be allowed

to repose as freely in his donkey's shadow as he might in that of the town-hall, or that of Jason's temple, where it is manifest that he may be as much and as often as he chooses? A shadow is a shadow and nothing else, whether it be that of a tree, an edifice, or an ass, or, with reverence be it spoken, that of the most excellent archon himself. In a word," said the guildmaster, seating himself, "put yourself into my hands, and that low-bred fellow shall not only give up his demand for the shadow, but for the use of the ass also; or neither freedom nor right of possession will hereafter be recognized in Abdera, a state of things which, by all the elements, shall never be the case, so long as I remain at the head of the company of cordwainers!"

The dentist having thus secured the patronage of so powerful a man, the ass-driver, on the other hand, did not neglect to obtain the support of one whose weight in the commonwealth was at least equal. Anthrax was, in point of fact, not a citizen of Abdera at all, but only a sort of free settler, who chiefly supported himself within the circuit of Jason's temple, and as such was under the jurisdiction and protection of the arch-priest of this hero,

who, as is well known, was especially revered and worshipped in Abdera. His first thought was therefore, naturally, to acquaint the arch-priest Agathyrsus with his difficulty; but then the arch-priest of Jason was in Abdera a person of great consideration, and it was scarcely to be hoped that an ass-driver could obtain an introduction to an individual of such exalted rank, unless through some peculiar channel.

Anthrax, after many consultations with his best friends, at last thought of an expedient by which he might effect his purpose. His wife Crobyle was acquainted with a milliner whose brother was a great favourite with the lady's-maid of a certain Milesian dancer, who, as report said, ranked very high in the estimation of the arch-priest. Unfortunately the ministers of Jason's temple were forbidden to marry, but the world whispered suspiciously, though freely, on the subject. The truth was, the priest was an extravagant admirer of pantomimic solo-dancing; but, to prevent the slightest cause for suspicion, he sedulously avoided seeing the lady by daylight, and only permitted her occasional visits to his study in the evening, and through a small side-door which led into his garden. Now, as certain persons had in the dim twilight

of the morning seen a thickly-veiled person go out through this door, there arose a vague rumour that it must be the dancer in question, and that the arch-priest had formed a very decided partiality for her; and indeed, had this been so, and Agathyrsus been anything else than the arch-priest, probably very little would have been said about it. Be this as it may, however, certain it is that the donkey-driver spoke with his wife, his wife with the dressmaker, the dressmaker with her brother, her brother with the lady's-maid, the lady's maid with her mistress; and as this last was all-powerful with the arch-priest, who on his part was all-powerful with the magistrates of Abdera and their ladies, Anthrax concluded, and not altogether without reason, that he had placed his business in the best hands in the world.

But it unfortunately happened that the waiting-maid had registered a solemn vow not to give her aid gratis, any more than Anthrax himself would give the shade of his donkey. She had a kind of tariff, in accordance with which the slightest service which could be required of her was valued at precisely four drachmas, and in the present case she was the less disposed to abate even half a drachma, in-

asmuch as it was a considerable letting-down of her dignity to become a politician in a cause the principal character in which was—an ass. In short, our Iris stood out for her four drachmas, which was just double what the poor suitor, even in the event of his gaining his suit, hoped to win by it. Again he felt himself in great perplexity, for could he hope that a humble ass-driver (with nothing to assist him but the justice of his cause) should succeed against a wealthy opponent supported by a whole community? Indeed, he knew that Struthion boasted everywhere that the victory was already in his hands. At length, after great anxiety, the worthy Anthrax thought of another scheme to influence the arch-priest in his favour, without the interposition of the dancer or her abigail; and its greatest advantage was that he had not far to seek for it.

To come to the point, he had a daughter named Sorgo, to whom, with the savings of his industry, he had given a tolerable musical education, hoping she would repay him what he had disbursed for her by making some good and permanent theatrical engagement. She was a decent singer, a good guitar-player, and had a fine figure, and, though not exactly one

of the handsomest, her large black eyes and the fresh bloom of youth made up, at least in the estimation of Anthrax, what she wanted in more regular charms. On festival-days, with her shining braided hair, and nosegay in her bosom, she resembled one of Anacreon's Thracian virgins, and it was soon found that the arch-priest Agathyrsus was fond of good guitar-playing and ballad-singing, in both which accomplishments the pretty songstress had some claims to proficiency, so that now the good Anthrax and his excellent wife thought their daughter's talents might be made of some account. At the same time they thought, as another auxiliary, it would be wise also for Anthrax to cultivate the friendship of the arch-priest's valet, while Crobyle instructed her daughter how to act so that she might in time supersede the dancer and remain the undisputed mistress of the garden-door.

The thing succeeded exactly as they wished. The valet, who was sometimes at his wits' end to satisfy the *penchant* of his master for variety, seized with both hands this auspicious opportunity, and the young Sorgo played her part wonderfully well for a beginner. Agathyrsus found in her a charming mixture of simplicity and

self-will, and a sort of wild grace, which pleased him, because he had never seen anything like it before. In short, she had scarcely sung three times in the cabinet of Agathyrsus before Anthrax was given to understand, on perfectly reliable authority, that the arch-priest had already employed several eminent counsel on his behalf, and had expressed with some zeal his determination that a dependant of Jason's temple should not be borne down and sacrificed by the chicanery of the sycophant Physignathus, and the partiality of the guildmaster Awl.

CHAPTER IV.

Judicial proceedings.—Report of the assessor.—Miltias' judgment.—And of what followed therefrom.

In the mean time, the important day had arrived on which this remarkable case was to be decided. The sycophants had done their part, and the pleadings were now laid before a referee, by name Miltias, concerning whose impartiality the enemies of the dentist had very serious misgivings. It could not be denied that he was on terms of the closest intimacy with the sycophant Physignathus, and beyond this it had been somewhat severely commented upon that Mrs. Struthion, one of the handsomest women of her class, had several times personally recommended to him the case of her husband. But as all these things furnished no legal ground of objection, and as Miltias was the proper judge

by rotation, affairs went on in their proper order.

Miltias set forth the history of the dispute so circumstantially, and gave the reasons for all his views so much in detail, and with so much impartiality, that for a long while the hearers were in doubt which way he would at last decide. He did not deny that there was much to be said on both sides. On the one hand, he observed, nothing could be clearer than that he who hired the ass, the principal, hired also the ass's shadow, the accessorium; that this was, in point of fact, tacitly implied, or, if any objection should be taken to this implied contract, still that the shadow followed the body of itself, so that the enjoyment of the shadow naturally belonged to him who had secured to himself the use of the substance; the more so, as not the least damage was done thereby to the essence and substance of the ass. On the other hand, it seemed not less clear, that though the shadow might be regarded either as an essential or circumstantial portion of the ass, yet it would by no means follow that the hirer of the one should be construed into being also the hirer of the other, notwithstanding that the aforesaid shadow could not be taken by itself, or without

the before-mentioned ass. He observed that the shadow of an ass was, philosophically considered, nothing less than a shadowy ass, and as the proprietor of the bodily ass was also the proprietor of the shadowy one, it was irrational to imagine that he should, without remuneration, let or give over the one to the hirer of the other. But, besides all this, if it were allowed that the shadow was only the *accessorium* of the living and more obvious donkey, yet the hirer does not obtain a right to every possible use of the ass, but only to that specified in the contract, viz. the journey agreed upon, and without which use the contract could not be carried out.

But, amongst all the laws of Abdera, nothing could be found distinctly bearing upon the subject, and the judgment of the court had therefore to be given upon the merits of the case. All the ingenuity of the lawyers was in consequence strained to the utmost, to prove whether a shadow was one of those common things to which every one has an equal right, or one of those in which an exclusive property could be established. In default of positive enactment, the custom of the whole human race may be reasonably taken as having the force of law, and

as being, in fact, a true oracle of Nature herself. Now, according to this custom, shadows are to be regarded as among those things which, like light, air, sunshine, are free and common to all, things in which no exclusive possession can be maintained.

This principle being laid down—and Miltias took care that it should be supported by a host of arguments, which we shall willingly spare the reader—it followed, as a matter of course, that the shadows of all the asses in Thrace were as free to the use of any one who could make use of them as the shadow of Mount Athos itself, that he who sat down in any shadow became for a time the possessor of it, and that the right ceased with the possession. In consequence of this it further followed that such shadows could not be the subjects of bargain and sale, of gift or bequest, and therefore not of letting or hiring.

These principles being applied to the suit of the ass-driver Anthrax against the dentist Struthion, it appeared that the latter had enjoyed a full right to the use of the shadow of the plaintiff's donkey, and the wise Miltias decided that Anthrax should not only be compelled to withdraw his claim for a separate sum, as hire

of the ass's shadow, but also be condemned in all the costs of this action.

We leave the decision of the sage Miltias to the consideration of the right-minded reader, and as we have resolved in the whole case to give no opinion ourselves, but to act the part only of a perfectly impartial historian, we shall be content with observing that it had been the custom in Abdera from time immemorial for the decision of the assessor, in all cases tried before the civil high court of justice, to be ratified either by the unanimous voice of the dicasts present, or at least by a great majority of them. At all events, no instance to the contrary had occurred for more than a century, and indeed it is difficult to imagine how such an instance should occur. For during the summing-up, which usually was rather a prolix matter, these gentlemen, who were, in fact, both judges and jury, were either staring out of the windows, or doing anything rather than attending to the business before them. Some indeed went bodily out of the court, paid visits to the neighbouring taverns, or called on their lady friends. Nor was the case very much better with those that remained, for they spent their time in whispering one to another, or falling asleep downright over the

pleadings. In short, there was established a kind of tacit compromise between the referee and the assessors, and it was only a matter of mere form that a few minutes before the former pronounced the final sentence, the latter should rise up each in his place, and confirm with becoming zeal the conclusion which had just been laid before the court.

But this law-suit of the ass's shadow had the distinguished honour done to it, that all the dicasts (except, perhaps, three or four who had promised their voices beforehand to the dentist, and would not give up their right of sleeping through the proceedings), not only kept together, but kept awake, as indeed was only due to so interesting a cause: and thus, when their votes came to be collected, it turned out that the judgment was ratified by a majority of only twelve against eight.

As soon as the proclamation of the verdict had been made, Polyphonus, the plaintiff's advocate, did not fail to raise his voice, and, declaring the decision unjust, partial, and null and void through legal inaccuracies, to appeal to the great council of Abdera. Now as the suit itself was about a matter which was only of the alleged value of two drachmas, and, even when all the

costs were added, was still within the amount required to render an appeal legal, there arose a great tumult in the court. The minority declared that it was not with them a question of money, but of right; that it concerned the very principle of property; and that, as no law existed upon the subject, it ought to be brought before the assembly of law-givers as the only body which, in such a case, could properly decide.

How it happened that the assessor, with all his zeal for the plaintiff, thought nothing of this question, or that his opponent's counsel would raise this pretext for the grand council to proceed upon, we can only account for on the ground that he was an Abderite, and, according to the custom of his townsmen, looked only on one side of a case, and that always the uppermost one. In this particular instance, perhaps, a further reason might be given for his having acted so carelessly, viz. that he had spent a great part of the preceding night at a banquet, and on his return the wife of Struthion succeeded in obtaining an audience of no small length, not adding greatly thereby to his night's rest.

At last, after much discussion, the city magistrate, Philippides, intimated that he should

bring the question whether the appeal should be permitted or not before the senate. So saying he rose, the members of the court dispersed rather tumultuously, and the plaintiff and defendant betook themselves, with their advocates, friends, and partisans, to consider what was to be done next.

CHAPTER V.

Opinions of the senate.—Virtue of the fair Sorgo, and its effects.—The priest Strobylus appears on the stage, and the matter becomes serious.

THE suit concerning the ass's shadow had at first amused the Abderites, and attracted their attention, only by its absurdity; but it had now become a matter in which their notions of right and wrong, and in fact their ideas of national honour, were involved.

The guildmaster Awl had taken it into his head that the member of *his* company must gain his cause, and as he spent almost every evening in gatherings of the people either for pleasure or business, he had already gained wellnigh half the citizens to his way of thinking, and his party was daily on the increase.

On the other hand, the arch-priest had not till now considered the matter weighty enough to require much exertion on his part on behalf

of his dependant; but now, the affair between him and the young Sorgo began to assume a more serious aspect, as, instead of a certain docility which he expected to find in her, he encountered a resistance which neither her parentage nor her education would have led any one to look for.

Indeed, as the young lady began to talk about the danger to her reputation which her frequent exits and entrances by the little garden-door might occasion, it seems by no means unnatural that Agathyrsus might think it worth while to interest himself a little more warmly in the cause of the father, if it were only to merit the gratitude of the daughter. The revived commotion which the reference of the case to the great council had made in the law-suit, gave him an opportunity of speaking on the subject with some of his own most particular friends in the senate. "However ridiculous the thing may be in itself, we must not allow a poor man living under the protection of Jason to be oppressed by a cabal." "The insignificancy of the original cause of dispute ought not," he said, "to be regarded, for this was not unfrequently the case with things of the greatest importance, but rather the spirit in which the matter had been undertaken, and the ulterior intentions which

were expressed, or at least entertained, in the case. Besides which it was quite time that the insolence of the sycophant Physignathus, who was most of all to blame for the scandal, should receive a check, and the tight rein be applied a little to that ambitious and overbearing demagogue, the guildmaster Awl, before he had succeeded in quite overthrowing the aristocracy of his native city."

It is only due to truth to observe that there were in the beginning of the controversy some who regarded the thing from a right point of view, and who expressed great contempt for the worthy police-magistrate Philippides that he had not strangled so ridiculous a suit in its birth; but even these gradually altered their opinion, and the enthusiasm, not to say fanaticism, which had already seized upon a large part of the people, began to make its way among the *savants* also. Some dated the change in their views from the time when a man of so much consequence as Agathyrsus became deeply and evidently interested in it, others from the period when they saw that there was danger to the aristocracy from the ascendancy of the guildmaster Awl.

Many embraced the side of the ass-driver out

of pure opposition, and many more because they really believed that a great wrong had been done to him; while, on the other hand, not a few declared for the dentist because certain persons with whom they did not choose to hold one opinion in common, had pronounced themselves on the opposite side.

Notwithstanding all this, however, the absurd contention would never have been carried to so great a height among the Abderites—Abderites though they were—as to have any perceptible effect on the commonwealth, had not the evil genius of the republic, in the shape of the priest Strobylus, stepped forward and mingled in the fray, with no greater cause so to do than the unquietness of his natural disposition and his hatred to Agathyrsus.

In order to make this the clearer to the amiable reader, we must do as the old poet did with his Iliad—we must begin "*ab ovo*," that is, from the beginning; and the more so as this will be the only way to make intelligible certain passages in the history of Euripides, and certain expressions which fell from the lips of Strobylus against the great naturalist Democritus.

CHAPTER VI.

The proportions of the temple of Latona compared with those of the temple of Jason.—Contrast between the characters of Strobylus and Agathyrsus.—Strobylus declares in favour of Struthion, and is supported by Salabanda, who begins to play a conspicuous part in the farce.

THE worship of Latona was, as Strobylus had informed Euripides, as old in Abdera as the transplantation of the Lycian colony, and the extreme simplicity which characterized the architecture of her little temple might reasonably be appealed to as a convincing proof of the fact.

However insignificant was the exterior of the shrine, the regular endowments of the priesthood were fully as unpretending. But as necessity is the mother of invention, these gentlemen had long since found out a way, by setting the superstition of the Abderites to work, to indem-

nify themselves for the very limited amount of their statutable incomes; and as these were clearly insufficient, they had succeeded in persuading the senate, which would never have increased their allowances by any augmentation specially devoted to that purpose, to set apart certain funds for the preservation of the holy frog-pools. It need hardly be said that the grateful and right-minded frogs left by far the larger part of such sums for the use of their conservators.

Very different were the circumstances of the temple of Jason, that renowned leader of the Argonauts, to whom in Abdera only was divine worship offered, and a place given among the greater gods.

We are not aware of any other grounds for this distinction, save that several of the oldest and richest families in Abdera traced their descent up to that hero. One of his grandsons had, as tradition asserted, settled down in that city and become the common father of several distinct lines, of which more than one were in full prosperity at the time of the present history. To honour the memory of the hero from whom they descended, they had at first consecrated a small chapel. With the progress of time this

grew into a kind of open temple, which the piety of the Jasonians had gradually provided with sufficient revenues. At last, when Abdera had become, through a series of fortunate circumstances, one of the richest cities in Thrace, the families of his blood determined to build to their deified ancestor a temple whose beauty should be at once an honour to their city and a wonder to posterity.

The new temple of Jason was a glorious work, and, with its dependent buildings, offices, asylum, and residences for the priests, together with its appropriate groves and gardens, made an entire quarter of the city. The arch-priest was required by statute to be always one of the members of the oldest Jasonian family, and as he had not only considerable revenues in virtue of his office, but also a supremacy over all persons and things connected with the temple, it is easy to imagine that the chief priest of Latona did not look with an eye of indifference on all these advantages. A sort of rivalry soon established itself between these prelates; their successors kept it up jealously, and on every suitable occasion it was sure to be manifested.

The chief priest of Latona was undoubtedly the head of the Abderite clergy; only the arch-

priest of Jason was not under his rule, but constituted with his dependants a separate college, which, save its acknowledgment of the laws of the city, was free from all control. The festival of Latona was the pre-eminent fast-day of the republic; but as the smallness of the temple revenues admitted but of little display, it came to pass that the feast of Jason, which was celebrated with extraordinary magnificence, was, in the eyes of the people, if not the most venerable, at least the most enjoyable, and all the reverence which they felt for Latona, and all the respect which they entertained for her priests and the holy frogs, could not prevent the arch-priests of Jason from making a greater figure and obtaining thereby a greater amount of consideration; and although the common people had probably more inclination towards the priests of Latona, yet even this was counterbalanced by the close connection existing between the arch-priest of Jason and the most aristocratic houses in the State. In short, a man in this position necessarily possessed such influence, that were he ambitious he might easily have made himself a sort of tyrant over the city.

Now, to all these hereditary causes of jealousy and rivalry between the heads of the Abderite

clergy, the present incumbents, Strobylus and Agathyrsus, added a personal enmity, which was the natural result of their very different ways of thinking.

Agathyrsus was far more a man of the world than a priest—of the latter he had indeed little more than the robes; the love of pleasure was his ruling passion, for though he was not wanting in pride no one could accuse him of ambition, so long as he allowed other inclinations to overrule that feeling. He loved the arts and familiar converse with virtuosi of all kinds, and had the reputation of being one of those priests who have little belief even in their own gods. At least, it must be confessed that he was partial to a rather free joke on the holy frogs of Latona, and there were persons found willing to swear that they had heard from his own lips the declaration, "that the frogs of that goddess had long ago been changed into wretched poets and Abderite singers."

That he lived on tolerably pleasant terms with Democritus, was not a fact calculated to increase the opinion of his orthodoxy.

In short, Agathyrsus was a man of good temperament, clear head, and rather free life, a favourite with the Abderite nobility, a still greater

favourite with the fair sex, and, on account of his open-handed liberality and stately Jasonian presence, almost as much a favourite with the lowest classes of the people.

Now Nature, in her most whimsical moment, had never formed a man more completely the antipodes of all this than was Strobylus. He had found by experience, as many like him have done, that a mortified countenance and a sanctimonious manner are infallible means, with the great majority of what are called religious people, of obtaining the character of a wise and pious man.

As Nature had furnished his visage with more than a reasonable amount of vinegar, it cost him very little to assume those manners which, to those who can look beneath the surface, signify nothing more than a limited understanding and an indomitable obstinacy. Without any taste for the sublime and beautiful, he was a born despiser of all the arts and sciences which develope that taste, and his hatred to philosophy was only the natural dislike of a stupid bigot towards all which was wiser and better than himself. In his decisions he was crooked and partial, in his opinions unreasonable, in controversy rude and vehement, and, whenever he believed himself to

be insulted or injured, either in his own person or in that of the holy frogs of Latona, to the utmost degree vindictive. With all this he was not the less submissive, even to meanness, when he could only obtain what he desired by the help of a person whom he hated. In addition, there seemed some ground for the opinion generally held of him, that, in any matter not altogether inconsistent with his character, he might easily be brought to reason by proper doses of golden darics or philips.

From such opposite elements, especially when the many circumstances of jealousy attached to, and indeed inseparable from, their respective positions, are taken into consideration, it will not be thought strange that a mutual hatred should arise, which was restrained with difficulty, and only kept within bounds at all by a great contempt on the part of Agathyrsus, which prevented his hatred to the chief priest from reaching the limits which it otherwise would have done, and from the energy which made it impossible for Strobylus to despise the arch-priest of Jason so much as he would fain have wished.

To all this must be added one more point of contrast. Agathyrsus, by reason of his birth and social position, belonged to the aristocracy;

Strobylus, notwithstanding his relations with certain senators, was a declared partisan of the democracy, and, next to the guildmaster Awl, was the very person who, by his character, weight, enthusiastic feeling, and a certain taking kind of popular eloquence, had the greatest influence with the *demos*.

It may easily be supposed that the affair of the ass's shadow became a more serious one, as soon as a few men, such as the principal priests of Abdera, mingled with it.

Strobylus, so long as the suit had been carried on before the ordinary tribunals, had taken no other part in it than declaring, from time to time, that he in such a case would have acted precisely as the dentist had done; but as soon as he learned through his niece, the Lady Salabanda, that Agathyrsus had made the interests of his *protégé*, however he might appear at first to despise them, really and earnestly his own, he felt it his duty to place himself at once at the head of the opposite party, and to support the guildmaster by all the influence which he had either with the senate or with the people.

Salabanda was too much accustomed to have a hand in all public business in Abdera, to be the last to take her part in such a matter as

the present. Besides her near relationship to the priest Strobylus, she had another reason to make common cause with him,—a reason not the less powerful for being kept to herself. We have mentioned on another occasion that this lady, out of mere political considerations, or, it may be, out of a little coquetry—and who shall say how far these two may not be sometimes mingled together?—thought fit always to have about her a number of willing slaves, among whom, mischievous people said, there must surely be one or another who knew what he served her for. Now the scandalous chronicle of Abdera asserted that Agathyrsus had at one time the honour to be one of these last, and, in point of fact, there were a number of circumstances which rendered such a report not altogether undeserving of attention. In fact, a very close and affectionate friendship subsisted between them when the *ballerina* came to Abdera, and before long Salabanda saw plainly enough that the fickle son of Jason had offered her up on the altar of his new divinity.

Agathyrsus visited her house on the same apparent footing as before, and the lady was a great deal too politic to give in her outward behaviour the least sign of change. But in her heart

she nourished wrath. She did not forget what it was which had so deeply involved the archpriest in the law-suit, and kept up his enthusiasm in it; secretly she tracked all his comings and goings—all doors open and shut, all approaches to his cabinet by day or night—till at last she found out all his intrigues with the young Sorgo, and was in a position to lay the story before the priest Strobylus. She enabled him to put the whole matter in as detestable a light as he pleased, choosing, for her own part, to use it with a view of rendering Agathyrsus ridiculous.

Agathyrsus, however little it cost him for the most part to sacrifice to his pleasures all sorts of political advantages, had his moments of obstinacy—moments in which a matter wherein he was at the bottom very little interested, could stir up all his pride; and whenever this took place his vivacity usually carried him a great deal further than he would have gone had he calmly and quietly reviewed the business. The reason which had at first induced him to mix himself up with so despicable a suit, no longer existed, for the young Sorgo, notwithstanding the advice of her mother, had either not manifested sufficient discretion, or not felt sufficient indifference to continue steadfast in resisting the

fascinations of so experienced a suitor as Agathyrsus.

But he was now embarked in the cause; his honour was concerned in its success. He had daily and nightly information how insolently the guildmaster and the priest with their followers discoursed about him, how they threatened, how high-handedly they hoped to carry their point, and the like; and this was more than sufficient to induce him to employ all his energies for the overthrow of enemies whom he so completely despised, and to chastise them for the very insolence of having attempted to oppose him.

Notwithstanding the cabal of the Lady Salabanda, which was not sufficiently fine-spun to be long concealed from him, he had the greater part of the senate on his side; and though his opponents left nothing untried to exasperate the people against him, yet he had partisans enough, especially in the guilds of butchers, braziers, and tanners, to be very formidable, from the power of their lungs and the strength of their arms, whenever either shouting or striking was required.

CHAPTER VII.

All Abdera divides itself into two parties.—The business comes before the council.

In the state of fermentation in which the whole city found itself, the two parties gradually came to be known by the respective, if not respectful, appellations of Asses and Shadows. How this came about it is not easy to show, but probably because so great parties could not go much longer without any names. The favourites of the dentist, remembering their right to the shadow, called themselves by its name, and out of contempt applied that of asses to their opponents. Now, as the followers of the arch-priest could not hinder the people from making the distinction, and as they gradually became accustomed to it themselves, they accepted the terms with good-nature, only turning

the point of the weapon against their adversaries, by connecting all that was ridiculous with the shadow, and all that was honourable with the ass: for they observed, justly enough, if a man had only the choice of being one or the other, he would much rather be a living donkey with all his belongings than the mere shadow of one. However this may be, certain it was, that in a few days all Abdera was divided into these two parties; and as soon as a name was found for them, so great was the jealousy and party-spirit displayed, that no one was allowed to remain neutral. "Are you a Shadow or an Ass?" was the first question put by the common citizens to one another, when they met in the street or at the tavern; and if a Shadow was so luckless as to be the only one of his kind among a number of Asses, his only ultimatum was, unless he could save himself by a timely retreat, either to apologize on the spot, or to be turned out of doors with every mark of contempt. Indeed, so great was the bitterness engendered by the dispute, that a genuine Shadow would rather perish with hunger, and join the Stygian shades in earnest, than buy a threepenny loaf of a baker of the Asses' party.

The women too, as may easily be imagined, took up the dispute, and that not with less warmth than the other sex: indeed, the first blood which was shed in the contest was drawn forth by the nails of two hucksters who fell upon each other's physiognomy in the open market. It was, however, remarked, that by far the greater portion of the Abderite ladies declared themselves on the side of the arch-priest; and where in any house the man was a Shadow, there it might be almost certainly depended upon that the wife was an Ass, and generally as enthusiastic and uncompromising a donkey as can be well imagined.

Among many lamentable as well as many ridiculous consequences of this party-spirit among the ladies, not the least remarkable was that a great many courtships were broken off quite suddenly, because the self-willed Shadow chose rather to give up his betrothed than his party, and on the contrary a great many were brought to a happy termination, after many years' hopeless pursuit, simply because the now-fortunate suitor avowed himself to be an Ass.

In the mean time the question whether the suit should be brought before the great council of the State, was debated in the senate; and although this was the first time that the venera-

ble body had been summoned to deliberate on so ridiculous an affair as an ass's shadow, yet each member had already taken his part. The archon Onolaus was the only person who appeared in doubt how he could give the matter a decent appearance. It was observed that he spoke much lower than usual, and at the close of his address he uttered these remarkable and ominous words:—"He feared much lest this ass's shadow, which was now the subject of so much contention, would darken the fame of the republic for centuries to come. His opinion was, that the appeal should be refused, the decree of the court below affirmed; that each party should bear his own costs; and that the whole matter should be buried in eternal oblivion. In the mean time," he added, "that if the laws of Abdera were not, in the opinion of the majority, sufficient to decide so contemptible a case, the great council must take the matter in hand, though he would strongly recommend that a strict search should be first made through the archives of the courts, in order to see if any cause at all similar had occurred before, and, if so, how it had been decided."

The moderation of the archon, which by impartial posterity will secure to him the repu-

tation of true administrative wisdom, was then, when party-spirit had blinded all eyes, only looked on as a proof of weakness and criminal indifference to the welfare of the republic. Several senators of the arch-priest's party at once began with great zeal to exclaim thus:—"Nothing ought to be called contemptible which concerned the freedom of Abdera. If there were no law on the subject there could be no lawful mode of proceeding, and the very first instance in which the judges were permitted to decide a case according to their own arbitrary will, would put an end to the liberties of the State. If the subject of the contest were even yet more contemptible than it was, the question was not how much or how little was the worth of the thing itself, but which of the parties was in the right; and as no law had as yet decided whether the shadow of the ass were really though tacitly included in the bargain, so neither the law-courts nor the senate itself could without open tyranny undertake to award to the lessee a thing to which the lessor had at least as good a right, or rather indeed a far better one, as it by no means followed from the nature of the contract that it had been the intention of this latter to let the shadow of

the ass at all;"—and a great deal more in the same strain. One of these gentlemen went so far as to say, in his enthusiastic party-spirit, that he had always been a zealous patriot, and ere he would permit that one of his fellow-citizens should be wrongfully deprived even of the shadow of an empty nutshell, he would see all Abdera in fire and flames.

At this Guildmaster Awl lost all patience. "The fire," he exclaimed, "with which the State has been so insolently threatened, should rather be fed with the person of one who talks so foolishly. I am no scholar," said he, "but I know what is what, and do not buy horse-litter for spices. A man must have lost his senses altogether if he imagines a law to be necessary just to enable a person to sit in the shadow of a donkey, when he has just purchased with hard cash the right to sit on the donkey itself; and besides this, it is a sin and a shame that so many skilful and distinguished men should be wasting their time and puzzling their brains about a matter that any child might settle in a quarter of an hour—for did ever anybody in all the world hear that shadows were among those things which men hired from one another?"

"The honourable gentleman," replied the senator Euphranor, "upsets his own argument in so speaking, for if the shadow of the donkey could not be hired, it follows as a matter of course that it *was* not hired; for he will permit me to remind him that *à non posse ad non esse valet consequentia.* The dentist can therefore, according to the honourable gentleman's own principles, have acquired no right to the shadow, and the judgment becomes null and void."

The guildmaster was posed, and as he did not see clearly how to answer this reasoning, he only talked the louder, and called heaven and earth to witnesss that he would rather tear out his grey beard hair by hair than let himself be made an ass of in his old age. The gentlemen of his party supported him with all their strength; but they were after all in a minority, and all they could obtain, by the help of the archon, and the senator of whom mention has been made before, was that the affair should remain *in statu quo* for a while till an investigation had been made into the archives of the courts, to see if there were any precedent according to which a suit of this great importance might be decided.

CHAPTER VIII.

Good condition of the Abderite Chancery Court.—Precedents discovered which have no bearing upon the subject.—Determination of the people to storm the senate-house.—Their fury assuaged by Agathyrsus.—The senate determines to leave the matter to the great council.

THE chancery of Abdera (since we have now an opportunity of mentioning it we may despatch the subject in a very few words,) was as well arranged and managed as might reasonably be expected from so wise a republic. There were, however, two faults charged against it,—faults which it shared with many other institutions of the same nature, and about which, in Abdera at least, for some centuries past, daily complaints had been made, without the idea occurring to anybody that they might perhaps, in one way or another, be remedied.

One of these faults was that the archives and

acts lay treasured up in an extremely damp vault, where they perished from want of air, mouldered away, became moth-eaten, and at last were found to be totally illegible.

The other was, that, whatever information was sought for by means of them, the documents required to substantiate it could never be found. As often as this took place, some patriotic senator would probably remark, and for the most part with the acquiescence of the whole body, that "this arose solely from the want of care and order in the department of the record-office." Indeed, it would have been difficult to devise an hypothesis by which the phenomena in question could be more satisfactorily explained. On this account it almost invariably happened, when the council ordered a search into the archives, the result was—and all the parties concerned made themselves perfectly sure of the fact beforehand—that nothing was found! The customary declaration, therefore, that all diligent search had been made in the record-office, and nothing had been there discovered, was received with perfect apathy, as a conclusion which everybody had fully expected.

This had been accordingly the case with the

search made in the present action, whether there might not be found some precedents calculated to aid the courts in their decision. Nothing had been found, although several gentlemen in the last session had been postively certain that there must have been innumerable actions of a similar nature decided. Meantime the zeal of a certain counsellor of the party of the Asses had discovered the records of two old law-suits, which had once made some stir in Abdera, and seemed to have some little resemblance to the present action.

The one concerned a dispute between the possessors of two plots of ground within the precincts of the city, about the right to a little hillock which lay between them. The hillock in question was about five or six feet in circuit, and might in process of time have reached the dimensions of a moderate molehill. A thousand little circumstances had so embittered the feelings of the two families concerned in the dispute, that each had determined rather to risk house and home than yield up the right to this molehill. The Abderite courts of justice were the more puzzled how to decide, inasmuch as the evidence on both sides consisted of an innumerable host of small, doubtful, and obscure facts. In fact,

after litigation of more than five-and-twenty years, the affair was not a step the nearer to settlement, but was, on the contrary, just five-and-twenty times more incomprehensible than it was in the beginning.

In all probability the matter would never have been decided at all, had not both the parties to the suit found themselves at last compelled to make over the estates between which the mole-hill lay to their respective lawyers, by way of liquidating the costs of the action. As the right to the molehill itself was thus conveyed away, the two lawyers made a friendly compromise about it on the very day of possession—they consecrated the hillock to the goddess Themis, planted a fig-tree upon it, and under the fig-tree placed on a pedestal the image of the goddess, made of fir-wood and painted to look like stone. This they did at their joint expense, and the senate promulgated a decree that the possessors of the two estates should be bound ever after to keep at their common charge both statue and pedestal in good order.

Both remained to the present time, in remembrance of that ancient law-suit—the fig-tree green and flourishing, but the statue in a very decayed and worm-eaten condition.

The other law-suit appeared to have a still closer resemblance to that which at the moment occupied the attention of the Abderites. A citizen named Pamplius possessed an estate, the chief advantage of which was, that on its south-west side it looked over a beautiful valley which lay between two well-wooded mountains, the prospect being at last terminated by the sea. Pamplius was in the habit of saying that he would not lose this prospect for a hundred Attic talents, and he had all the more reason for rating it so high, inasmuch as the property itself was of so little value that no one who regarded its uses only would have given the twentieth part of such a sum for it.

Unfortunately a neighbour of his, on this very south-west side—a man tolerably well off in the world—thought fit to build a barn, in such a position as to take away at least four-fifths of the view, and thus, in the opinion of Pamplius, made the property less desirable to the value of eighty talents. Pamplius went to his neighbour, and very amicably entreated him to abstain from such an oppressive act; but the builder persisted in standing up for his *right* to build on his own land as he chose.

The subject was referred to law. Pamplius certainly could not prove that the prospect was an essential and indispensable part of his estate, or that his neighbour's barn shut out air and light from him, or that his grandfather, from whom the property came in a direct line to him, had given a single drachma more, on account of the prospect, than the land was worth in the time of Pamplius himself; neither could he assert that his neighbour was under any kind of engagement to him in virtue of which he was bound to pull down the barn at his desire.

Only his advocate contended that the real question at issue lay much deeper, and arose out of the original idea of all property. "If the air were not a transparent medium, Elysium and Olympus itself might be opposite my client's estate, and he would be able to enjoy the sight of them as little as though a high wall were built right up to the sky against his window. This transparent nature and peculiarity of the atmosphere is the first and trûe cause of that lovely prospect which renders my client's property so desirable. Now this free and transparent air is, as everybody knows, one of those common things which are equally the property

of all, and every unoccupied portion of it must be regarded as a *res nullius*, a thing which belongs to nobody, and, therefore, which becomes the property of him who first takes possession of it. From time immemorial the ancestors of my client have together with their estate possessed and enjoyed the prospect which is now in dispute, unhindered and uncontested by any man. They have therefore with their eyes occupied the thereunto-belonging portion of air, and through this occupation the aforesaid portion has become an essential part of the hereinbefore-mentioned estate, and no part of this, however small, can be taken away without bringing into danger of destruction every principle of law and rectitude."

The senate of Abdera found this reasoning very powerful. The litigation went on with great subtlety on both sides, and, as Pamplius himself was during the course of it elected into the senate, the cause became daily more and more intricate, and the arguments on his side all the more considerable. At last the farmer died without seeing any end of his law-suit, and his heirs, perceiving that simple agriculturists like them could do little or nothing

against so great a man as a senator of Abdera, allowed their advocate to bring the matter to a compromise, by which it was agreed that they should pay the costs of the action, and abstain from completing the proposed barn, the rather as they had no money left to finish it, and the law-suit had so eaten up their estate that there was no longer any necessity for a barn upon it at all.

Now it must have been pretty clear that neither of these actions could throw any light upon the present, inasmuch as in neither of them had any legal decision been arrived at: both, by good luck, had been ended by a compromise. But the senator who produced them seemed desirous of turning them to no other account than merely to prove to the senate that in neither case—though both, by reason of the importance of the matter in dispute, and of the subtlety of the arguments employed, bore a great resemblance to that concerning the ass's shadow—had any attempt been made to appeal to the great council, all the parties, as well clients as advocates, being fully persuaded that the ordinary courts had power and authority to deal with such cases.

The assembled Asses supported this view with the more zeal in that they were decidedly a majority if the suit were to be decided by the ordinary courts; but on this very account the Shadows only persisted the more resolutely in their opposition.

The whole morning was consumed in quarrelling and shouting, and the gentlemen would have separated at dinner-time without really having transacted any business, when a great number of Shadows, who, under the management of the guildmaster Awl, had assembled before the council-house, and reinforced themselves by a crowd of the lowest classes, at last brought the matter to a conclusion. The party of the archpriest subsequently laid to the charge of the guildmaster that he had quietly stepped on to the balcony, and by well-understood signs excited the people to an uproar. Their opponents, however, stoutly denied the imputation, and asserted that the intolerable noise and confusion created by the Asses had given the assembled citizens a notion that some violence was being done to the members of their party, and this mistake had occasioned the whole disturbance.

However this may be, certain it is that a piercing yell suddenly assailed the windows of

the council-chamber: — "Liberty! liberty! Guildmaster Awl for ever! Down with the donkey! down with the Jasonians!"

The archon came to the window, and begged the crowd to be quiet. But the tumult rather increased than diminished, and some of the boldest among the rioters declared that they would burn down the senate-house, unless the gentlemen would disperse at once, and leave the whole matter to be decided by the people in their great council. Some bad characters (and a few fishwomen were among them) broke into one or two of the neighbouring houses, snatched lighted brands from the hearth, and ran back with them in their hands to show honourable gentlemen that their threats were meant quite in earnest.

In the mean time the concourse that was thus occasioned brought up also a number of Asses, who came to help their friends with pokers, tongs, shovels, cleavers, dung-forks, and anything else that came to hand; and though they were greatly outnumbered by the Shadows, yet, by means of their vivacity, the contempt in which they held their opponents, and the cuffs and thrusts by which they enforced their verbal insults, they soon made broken heads

rather common casualties; and the riot became universal.

In such a state of affairs as this, it was clear enough that only one course was open to those assembled in the senate-house, and that was, for the sake of peace and out of a desire for the common good, to leave the suit of the ass and his shadow to be decided by the great council of the State, only providing that this should be done without prejudice, and should on no account be drawn into a precedent.

Meantime honourable gentlemen felt so uneasy in their seats, that as soon as they had—though, it must be confessed, in a very tumultuous way —arrived at this conclusion, they begged with outstretched hands of Mr. Guildmaster Awl just to step down and quiet the people. The guildmaster was pleased enough to see the patricians so completely in the power of the populace, and quite willing to exhibit both his good-will towards one party and his authority with the other; but the tumult was now so great that his voice, though one of the most stentorian in Abdera, could be heard as little as the cry of a ship-boy at the mast-head in the midst of the most furious tempest. Indeed, the wrath of the mob had become so hot that

his own life would not have been quite secure—especially as, in their rage, they did not rightly distinguish who it was—when, most happily for all parties, just at that moment the arch-priest Agathyrsus, who thought this the most opportune moment to make a demonstration, came by with his golden fleece on a pole, and all his priesthood about him. He found means to calm the uproar, and gave the excited multitude the assurance that they should have satisfaction, and that he would himself be the first person to propose bringing the matter before the great council.

This open assurance of the arch-priest, together with his coolness and courtesy, and perhaps also the reverence with which the Abderite people were accustomed to regard the golden fleece, had so good an effect that in a few minutes the whole crowd was quiet, and the market-place resounded with shouts of "Agathyrsus the arch-priest for ever!" The wounded slipped off home to bind up their broken heads, and the rest of the assembly streamed away after the arch-priest. The guildmaster had thus the mortification of seeing a great part of his devoted Shadows, separated from the rest of their body help to swell the triumph of his enemy.

In that moment of intoxication it would have been no hard matter to induce them to pour out all those vials of wrath which they had prepared for their presumed enemies, the Asses, on the devoted heads of their chosen friends the Shadows.

CHAPTER IX.

Politics of both parties.—The arch-priest follows up his advantages.—The "Shadows" recede.—The day of decision is appointed.

THE unexpected advantage which the arch-priest had gained over the "Shadows" damaged that party all the more effectually, as it not only deprived them of the joy and glory of the victory which they had already gained in the senate, but yet further weakened them by showing how light was the hold which they had on the popular mind. It was a proof of the fickleness of the multitude, who very seldom know what it is they really want.

Agathyrsus, now the avowed head of the Asses, had by his emissaries discovered that nothing had so far promoted the cause of his opponents among the common people as the opposition which he and his friends had made

in the beginning to permitting the appeal to be made to the great council.

Now, as this council consisted of four hundred men, who were regarded as the representatives of the whole body of Abderite citizens, and as at least half of them consisted of small tradesmen and artisans, each person eligible to a place in the council considered himself personally injured by the supposed intention of limiting the prerogative of the council; and thus the dexterous pretence of Mr. Guildmaster Awl, that the whole was a deeply-laid scheme for overturning the democracy, found the more ready belief.

In fact, all that was really democratic in the Abderite constitution was little more than a theory, for the lesser council (two-thirds of which consisted of the highest classes) did for the most part whatever it chose, and the occasions on which alone the great council could be assembled were so limited by the fundamental laws of the State, that it almost always lay with the smaller council to determine whether the four hundred were to be called together or not: indeed, they were usually assembled only for the purpose of ratifying what the other council had already decided. But on the very account

that this right of the Abderite commons was of so little political importance, they were all the more zealous in asserting and defending it, and it was of the greater consequence to conceal from the people the wheels which governed their motions, as they firmly believed that they moved spontaneously. Now it was really a master-stroke on the part of Agathyrsus, that he, exactly at the moment when their decision must be most valuable, induced the people to decide in favour of his party, by appearing to give them what they most valued; and as, instead of risking anything by the step, he had only introduced dissensions into the camp of his adversaries, they, on the contrary, were now obliged to seek out new means to oust the arch-priest and his adherents from their newly-acquired vantage-ground, and to extinguish the favour which they had gained with the democracy.

The heads of the Shadows assembled one evening at the house of the Lady Salabanda, and determined that instead of urging the archon to fix an early day for the gathering of the four hundred, they should rather, if the assembly must be held at all, delay it as long as possible, in order to give the people time to cool. In the mean time they lost no opportunity

of impressing on the people how foolish it was to attribute to good-will and democratic feeling on the part of the arch-priest a step which simply arose out of their weakness—for if the Asses had had it in their power to prevent the suit being carried before the great council, they certainly would have done it, and troubled themselves very little whether the people liked it or not;—that this sudden departure from their former policy was too gross an attempt to scatter disunion among the party of the people, to impose upon men of common sense. On the contrary, true patriots ought to be more on their guard, now they saw how easily the *demos* was influenced by a few sweet words, lest such means should be made instrumental to the destruction of the popular liberties.

The high-priest Strobylus, who was present at this and similar meetings, did all that man could do to diminish the influence of his rival among the people, and to put his intentions in an odious point of view. "Only," said he, "I am rather in doubt whether we shall get from these measures all the results we wish. I am preparing for him another and a sharper chastisement, which will have all the more effectual working, inasmuch as it will fall quite unexpectedly upon

his head. The time has not yet come for me to explain myself more clearly: leave the matter in my hands. Let him flatter himself yet a little longer with the hope to drag the priest Strobylus after him in his triumphal procession. His joy shall be abundantly embittered to him, be quite well assured of that. In the mean time, if we are honourable to one another, as I trust we are, and thoroughly in earnest to obtain a victory over our enemies; we must keep close tongues over what I have just hinted about my intentions, and wait the time for discovery. Agathyrsus must be allowed to rest in fancied security; he must imagine that we have only one string to our bow, and that our only trust lies in the majority which we hope to obtain in the great council."

Everybody agreed that the high-priest had hit the right nail on the head, and the meeting separated, very curious to know what the punishment was which the priest had *in petto* for his antagonist, but at the same time quite convinced that if it contemplated the entire ruin of the latter, it could not be in more zealous hands than those of Strobylus.

While these intrigues were carried on, Agathyrsus did not fail on his part to improve the

advantages which his presence of mind at so critical a period had given him. He had taken care to regale the crowd who followed him to the archi-sacerdotal palace with bread and wine, and earnestly exhorted them to peace and quietness, before he dismissed them to their homes. They followed his advice, and entertained all their neighbours with praises of their princely host, the graces of his person, and the courtesy of his manner. But though he knew the republic too well to despise these tokens of popular favour, he knew also that he had not yet gained much by them. The one thing needful was to secure a majority among the four hundred, partly because these would have to decide the matter in hand, partly because, these being secured, he could make much more parade with them than with the rest of the people. He had already a considerable party among them; but, besides a great number of declared and zealous Shadows, with whom he dared not meddle, there were in the ranks of the four hundred not a few, and those precisely the most respectable of the whole body, who had either not declared themselves at all, or who seemed a little inclined to the party of the Shadows, because the heads of the opposite faction appeared to

them as ambitious, self-seeking persons,—men, in short, who had fostered this ridiculous strife between Asses and Shadows only to set the commonwealth in commotion, and in the midst of the tumult to secure their own private ends. To bring these people to his side now appeared as easy to him as it would undoubtedly be decisive of the triumph of his party. He invited them all from time to time to dinner. Most of them accepted, and the arch-priest, who had a particular gift to cover all his policy with an appearance of great openness and straightforwardness, made no secret that he had invited them with a view of neutralizing, with the aid of such honourable and intelligent men, the prejudices which a portion of the citizens had excited against him. That, in a dispute between an ass-driver and a dentist, and one too in which the matter in question was merely the shadow of an ass, a man of his position should seek to be made the head of a party, was really too ridiculous for belief. At the same time the poor Anthrax was a dependant of Jason's, and he could not refuse to take the man under his protection just so far as justice required. Had it not [redacted] for the untimely and unwarrantable [redacted] the guild-master Awl, who had constituted himself the

patron of the dentist—not because the man was in the right, but because he was a member of the cordwainers' guild—so insignificant a cause would never have reached so high a degree of importance. But as soon as a fire is kindled there are always found people to keep it up with fuel and bellows. He for his part had made it a rule never to meddle with things that did not concern him; and he hoped the step he had taken to quiet the uproar excited by the adherents of the guildmaster Awl, would not be regarded by reasonable men as an unjustifiable interference, but simply as the act of a good citizen desirous to have order kept in the commonwealth, the more so as such a proceeding was far more suitable to the priestly character than to throw oil on the fire, as had been done by some whom it was needless for him to name. As to the rest he did not deny that since the affair had not been settled in the first instance, but had grown to such a magnitude that all Abdera took an interest in it, he wished now that it should be brought before the great council, and the sooner the better. He desired this not only because poor Anthrax would then get that justice which was so necessary to him, and which there could be no doubt would be willingly

awarded to him by so high and honourable a court, but because some bounds might at the same time be set to the hitherto unrestrained self-will of the sycophants, and this description of law-suit, which did so little credit to Abdera, be as far as possible prevented in future.

Agathyrsus said all this with so much self-possession, and almost indifference, that his guests could scarcely wonder enough at the unrighteousness of those who wanted to make out so right-minded a gentleman to be one of the chief promoters of the disturbance. They considered themselves now fully convinced of the contrary, and he succeeded, in a few hours, in turning these cautious people, without their being at all aware of the fact, into as good and genuine Asses as any in Abdera—and they all the while believed themselves to be altogether impartial! Perhaps the excellent wine which he set before them might have had something to do with the transformation, by extinguishing every shadow of mistrust, and opening every mind to the impressions which their host desired to make.

It may easily be imagined that this proceeding of Agathyrsus added much to the uneasiness of

the other party. The revolution which had thus taken place in that portion of the citizens which had been hitherto indifferent, became day by day more evident. It was equally plain, too, that the batteries which the redoubled zeal and jealousy of the Shadows directed against their opponents, not only did not help their cause, but produced quite the contrary effect, by bringing out into strong contrast the rage and ill-temper of the Shadows with the calm dignity and patriotic language of the prelate and his party. The Shadows would now have been puzzled what to do in order to keep up the spirits of their almost despairing partisans, if the priest Strobylus had not encouraged them by the assurance that as soon as the day of decision was fixed he would raise such a storm about the ears of the little Jason (as he was accustomed to call the arch-priest) as he could by no amount of cunning foresee, and which would not fail entirely to change the aspect of affairs.

The Shadows seemed now to keep so quiet that Agathyrsus and his friends could only attribute their depression to the effect of that twofold advantage which he had obtained over them. They redoubled, therefore, their prayers

to the archon Onolaus (whose son was one of the most intimate friends of the arch-priest, and the most determined Ass in Abdera) to fix as early a day as possible to bring the matter before the great council, and by their continual urgency they at last succeeded in getting the day fixed for the sixth after the last session of the ordinary council. Those who are accustomed to judge of the wisdom of any plan, or the expediency of any policy, from its results, will probably condemn the arch-priest, as wanting in prudence in allowing himself to be lulled into security by the sudden inactivity of his opponents; and we cannot altogether acquit him of this error. We do not deny that it would have been more politic of him had he attributed this sudden inactivity to some deep-laid design over which they were brooding in silence, rather than to the indifference of despair; but it was always one of the faults of this distinguished man to have not only a very vivid conviction of his own strength, but also, arising out of this, a too great contempt for the power and tactics of his enemies. He never thought it worth his while to reckon what mischief his adversaries could do him, because he was fully convinced the means would never fail him to ward off the

most dangerous of their assaults. At the same time it must be allowed that hundreds of other men placed in similar circumstances would have acted and thought precisely as he did, and turned the good-will of these new friends to good account before their zeal had time to cool down and the enemy to recover their lost ground.

That the result of these proceedings was not exactly such as might have been expected, arose from a stroke of policy on the part of the priest Strobylus, one which no wisdom of Agathyrsus could enable him to foresee. However well acquainted he might be with the character of the man, the stroke in question was of such a nature that actual experience alone would have convinced him that Strobylus was capable of it.

CHAPTER X.

What sort of a mine the priest Strobylus sprang for the destruction of his rival.—Assembling of the Decemviri.—The arch-priest is summoned to appear before them, but contrives to extricate himself without damage, and to turn the circumstance to his advantage.

The day before the suit which had so disturbed the tranquillity of Abdera for some weeks past was to be finally decided by the great council, the priest Strobylus, very early in the morning, came attended by two of the clergy of Latona's temple and several other persons of consideration, to wait on the archon. The whole party was in a state of great perturbation and excitement, and their object was to obtain the attention of the chief magistrate to a portent which, as they had reason to fear, boded nothing less than absolute ruin to the republic.

For two nights running some of the persons

engaged in the temple service had believed that they heard the frogs of the holy pool, instead of their usual chorus of Brek-kek-kek-koax-koax—which chorus they shared not only with all other natural frogs here on earth, but, if we may believe Aristophanes, with those also in the Stygian marshes—had uttered very unusual and lamentable tones, although the aforesaid persons had been too frightened to go near enough to distinguish clearly what those sounds were.

As soon as this portent was mentioned to Strobylus, which had only been done on the preceding evening, the matter seemed to him so serious that he resolved to spend the whole night with his subordinate priests by the side of the sacred pool. Until about midnight the deepest silence prevailed, but at that time a mournful wailing burst forth from the pool, and as they approached more closely they could clearly distinguish the words, "Woe! woe! alas! alas!" These lamentations endured for about the space of an hour, and were heard not only by the priests, but by all those who had been brought to witness so frightful and hitherto unheard-of a prodigy.

Now there could be no doubt that, by this terrific and threatening miracle, Latona in-

tended either to warn the citizens of her beloved Abdera of some great mischief hanging over their heads, or to excite them to the punishment of some as yet undiscovered crime, which might otherwise bring down the wrath of the gods upon their devoted city.

This being his own view of the case, it became his duty, in virtue of his office, and in the name of Latona, to entreat his excellency at once to call together the college of the Decemviri, that this portent might be considered with the attention which its importance demanded, and such other steps taken as the immediate danger might be judged to require.

The archon, who had the reputation of inclining a little towards the free-thinking notions of Democritus about the holy frogs, shook his head at this narration, and it was some minutes before he gave the priests any answer at all. But the earnestness with which these gentlemen pressed the subject on his attention, and the evident impression which had been made on the other witnesses of the alleged miracle, convinced him that, before many hours were over, all Abdera would be full of this new wonder, and probably seized with such terror and consternation as would render indifference on his part quite out

of the question. Nothing was left to him but at once, and in the presence of the priests, to give the order required, and to summon the Decemviri to meet in one hour's time in the temple of Latona, to consult on the extraordinary prodigy which had just occurred.

In the mean time the report of a fearful miracle which had been observed for three nights running in the grove of Latona, had, by the care of the chief priest, circulated throughout the city.

The friends of Agathyrsus were not so simple as to be taken in by all this trickery, and they felt, with as much bitterness as indignation, that under the whole lay a plot against their patron and their party. Many of the younger gentlemen and ladies of the city affected to jest about the new wonder, and made up nightly parties to hear the elegiac music of Latona's frogs. But on the common people, and on a great many of their betters too, who in things of this nature are often found very like the vulgar, the narration of the priest did not fail to have its full effect. The "woe! woe! alas! alas!" of the holy reptiles interrupted all private and public business. Old and young, women and children, gathered together in the streets, and inquired, with pale and anxious countenances, into the

particulars of the portent. Everybody was naturally desirous of having the history from the lips of the first witnesses, and as the impression which the narrator sees made on his hearers excites almost always a desire to add whatever may make the story more interesting, so in this case the whole marvel was in the course of an hour or two enriched with such astounding additions, that the hair of the listeners stood on end with affright. Some asserted that the frogs, when they commenced their fatal song, had put forth out of the pool human heads; others, that they had great fiery eyes as big as walnuts; others again, that ghastly spectres had been seen at the same time floating round the grove, and uttering fearful howlings, while there were not wanting some who declared that though the heavens were perfectly clear and calm elsewhere, yet over the holy pool it had thundered and lightened; and, finally, a few avowed that in the melancholy song of the frogs they had clearly distinguished the words, "Woe to thee, O Abdera!" In short, the wonder, like all wonders, went on ever increasing; and the more unreasonable, the more monstrous and incredible, the things asserted, the more ready belief they found in the minds of the multitude.

And now the college of the Decemviri were assembled in the temple of Latona, and no doubt was felt among the people, when they gazed on the perplexed and melancholy countenances of those venerable men, hastening to the sacred grove, that in the cup of Abderitan destiny ingredients of extraordinary importance were being mingled; and they awaited the result in trembling expectation.

This sacred body, which was considered the most venerable in Abdera, consisted of the archon, the four eldest senators, the two senior guildmasters, the high-priest of Latona, and the two overseers of the holy grove. All matters which concerned the religion of the State were considered to be under its cognizance, and the respect in which it was held was almost unbounded.

It is an old observation, that wise men grow usually wiser as they grow older, and fools more foolish. A Nestor among the Abderites would seldom be found to have gained much by living through three generations, and it might be predicted, with tolerable safety, that the Decemviri of Abdera were, taken on an average, the possessors of the emptiest heads in all the republic. The good people were so willing to receive the

narration of the high-priest as a fact against the reality of which there could by no possibility be any objection to make, that they considered the hearing of evidence just as a piece of formality, and nothing more—a thing which had to be got over, and could not be done too quickly.

As Strobylus found these respectable men fully convinced of the accuracy of his statements, he considered that he should now risk little if he proceeded at once to that stroke of policy on account of which he had invented the whole fable.

"From the first moment," said he, "that with my own eyes I became a witness to this astonishing miracle, which, I may say without hesitation, is altogether without a parallel in the annals of Abdera, the conviction has forced itself on my mind that it must be a warning from the goddess that her wrath had been excited by some yet undiscovered crime, and was hanging over our heads. For this cause I felt myself bound at once to petition his excellency the archon to summon a meeting of this most venerable college. What was in my mind *then* a mere suspicion, has since been converted into a certainty: the criminal has been discovered, and the crime can be substan-

tiated by eye-witnesses, whose veracity will the less be called in question as the offender is a person of such great power and consideration that nothing but a fear of the gods could induce persons of low position in society to bear evidence against him at all. Most reverend gentlemen, would you, let me ask, have considered it possible that any one among us could be, daring enough to treat with contumely what has been handed down to us from the very founders of our city as deserving of all respect and reverence, to bring into contempt our religious worship, and to profane, without consideration either for the laws or the common belief of our State, what we deem most sacred? In a word, could you believe that there lived a man in Abdera who, in spite of the very letter of the law, kept storks in his garden, and fed them daily with frogs out of the pool of Latona?"

Astonishment and fright displayed themselves on the countenances of all present but one. At last the archon, in order not to be the only exception, thought it necessary to look as frightened as his colleagues really were. Is it possible?" cried two or three of the oldest at once, "and who can the wretch be who is guilty of such a crime?"

"Pardon me," said Strobylus, "if I entreat you to soften that harsh expression. I for my part am quite willing to believe that not impiety, but mere thoughtlessness, or what, since the time that Democritus has sown his seeds of unbelief among us, has been called philosophy, has been the origin of this offence. I will, and must, the more readily hold this opinion, inasmuch as the man against whom it can be proved by the united testimony of more than seven witnesses, is himself a sacred person—a sacred priest—in a word, it is the descendant of Jason—Agathyrsus himself!"

"Agathyrsus!" cried the astonished Decemviri with one voice. Three or four turned pale, and seemed utterly perplexed to find a man with whom and with whose connections they had always stood on the best terms, mixed up in such a matter.

Strobylus gave them no time to recover themselves, but proceeded at once to call in his witnesses. They were heard one after another, and it was elicited that Agathyrsus had, at all events for some time past, kept two storks in his garden, that they had often been seen hovering over the holy pool, and that one at least of its croaking inhabitants, while sunning himself on

the bank, had been seen to become the prey of the stork.

Now, though the veracity of the witnesses seemed to be beyond all doubt, yet the archon Onolaus observed that with such a man as the arch-priest of Jason it would be well, for fear of unpleasant consequences, to go softly to work, and to intimate to him in a friendly way, on the part of the Decemviri, that they were satisfied that the thing complained of had taken place without his knowledge, and that he should be requested without opposition to give up to the Decemviri the storks which had invaded the precincts of the holy pool, and thus give an unmistakable proof of his good-will towards the customs and laws of their ancestors.

Three voices out of the nine supported the proposition of the archon, but the priest Strobylus and the remaining five set their faces with the greatest zeal against it. They asserted that while it was not for a moment to be tolerated that a citizen of Abdera, if found guilty of so serious an offence, should be treated with such misplaced lenity, still the cause of justice required that no man should be condemned without a hearing. The high-priest added that Agathyrsus ought to be cited to appear before the Decemviri and answer the accusation brought

against him. The resolution passed by six voices against four, and the arch-priest was summoned with all the customary formalities.

Agathyrsus was not unprepared when the messengers of the Decemviri appeared at his house. After keeping them at least an hour waiting, he at last received them in his hall of audience, seated on an ivory chair, in his priestly robes, and surrounded by his clergy.

In this state he calmly awaited the address of the stammering spokesman. As soon as the message was delivered, he made a sign to a servant who stood at a respectful distance behind his chair, and said, "Take these gentlemen into the garden, and show them the storks that they have been talking about, that they may tell their principals that they have seen them with their own eyes; and then bring them back again here." Ordered off in this way, the deputation stared; but reverence for the arch-priest tied their tongues, and they followed the lacquey, silent with wonder, and with the air of men who did not rightly know what they were about.

When they returned Agathyrsus asked them whether they had seen the storks, and as they all answered "Yes," he added, "Now go and take my compliments to the most worshipful

body of the Decemviri who have sent you, and tell them that these storks, as well as everything else within the compass of this temple, are under the protection of Jason, and, further, that to cite an arch-priest of this temple, and to judge him according to Abderite law, I consider a very ridiculous assumption of authority;" and with these words he signed to them that they might withdraw.

This reply, for which the Decemviri ought to have been better prepared, as it was perfectly known to them that the temple of Jason and its precincts, as well as its priesthood and all connected with it, were exempt from the jurisdiction of the republic, did nevertheless throw them into a very unenviable state of perplexity. The high-priest Strobylus fell thereat into such a furious passion that he knew not what he said. He concluded a most intemperate oration by threatening the whole republic with destruction, unless the most complete satisfaction were given to Latona, and avowed that he did not see how this could be done save by humbling the overweening pride of an inflated peacock who, as he declared, ought not to be regarded as a priest at all.

The archon, and the three of the Decemviri

who agreed with him, remarked, in reply, that Latona, for whom and for whose frogs they entertained the greatest possible reverence, would derive no satisfaction from the Decemviri overstepping the boundaries of their jurisdiction. "I said as much as this to you before, but you would not listen. If my proposal had been accepted, I am quite certain that the arch-priest would have sent us a reasonable and courteous reply, for a good word always finds a good reception. But the worthy high-priest thought he had found an opportunity to indulge his old grudge against Agathyrsus, and now we see that he and his zealous adherents have brought a slur upon the dignity of the magistrature which it would take all the water of the Hebrus and the Nestus a century to wash away. I confess," said the archon, with a warmth which had not been observed in him for many years past, "I am weary of being at the head of a State which allows itself to be overturned by frogs and asses' shadows, and I have a great mind to lay down my office before I am a day older; but so long as I do hold it I will hold you responsible, Mr. High-priest, for whatever disorders from this moment forward take place in the streets of Abdera." And with these

words, which he accompanied with a very determined look on the astounded Strobylus, the archon rose, and, followed by his three adherents, left the rest of their colleagues in the most unmitigated astonishment.

"What is to be done now, gentlemen?" at last said the high-priest, who, seeing the new turn that affairs were taking, began to be not a little uneasy; "what is to be done now?"

"That is exactly what we do not know," replied the senior guildmaster and two of the senior senators, and took their departure forthwith, so that Strobylus remained alone with the two conservators of the holy pools and goddess. For some time they all three spoke at once without troubling themselves about the statements or arguments of each other, and then concluded by a unanimous resolution to repair to the house of one of the conservators, and there to—dine. After this they would take further counsel with their partisans as to what steps should be taken, so as, by means of the commotion which was still raging in the city, to secure the victory to their own side.

CHAPTER XI.

Agathyrsus calls his adherents together.—Substance of his address to them.—He invites them to a grand sacrificial feast.—The archon Onolaus determines to resign his office.—Uneasiness of the arch-priest's party at this determination.—By what stratagem they frustrate his purpose.

In the mean time Agathyrsus delayed not, as soon as the delegates of the Decemviri had left him, to call together his adherents both in the council and among the citizens, and besides them all the Jasonians. He related to them what had happened to him through the intrigues of the priest Strobylus with the Decemviri, and pointed out to them how necessary it was, not only for the success of their party, but also for the honour and even the safety of Abdera, to frustrate the designs of this rancorous person. The people, through the ridiculous fable of the frogs and their lamentations, were now in com-

motion; they required to be calmed, and to have an impulse given to them in another direction. It must be evident that Strobylus had only invented this miserable legend to trump up an accusation, contemptible in itself, but formidable on account of the superstitions of the people, against him—the arch-priest—before the Decemviri, and to make out of it an affair weighty enough to interest the whole republic; but that, after all, this was only one of those means which in his despair he had embraced to raise up again his sunken party, and, through the commotions excited thereby in the State, to give new hopes to the Shadows.

From all this it required no prophet's eye to foresee that out of the materials which had been furnished by that morning's work the restless priest would organize new intrigues to make him (Agathyrsus) still more unpopular, and, if needful, to excite a second and still more dangerous uproar. On these accounts he had judged it prudent to assemble his trusty friends—friends also of the commonwealth—in order to lay before them the state of the case, and to enable them to indoctrinate the common people, and all who were in a similar condition, with correct ideas as to the

circumstances which had recently transpired, and their inevitable consequences. As for the storks, they had come without any instrumentality of his, and had built themselves a nest in a tree in his garden. He had not thought it right to disturb them, partly because storks, among all civilized nations, were looked upon as having a kind of right to hospitality, and partly because the privileges of the temple of Jason include an inviolable asylum to every living thing within its precincts. The law by which the Decemviri had lately forbidden the keeping of storks within the State of Abdera, did not concern them at all, and indeed, strictly speaking, the jurisdiction of the council itself only extended to what concerned the worship of Latona and its accessories. It ought, too, especially to be remembered that the temple of Jason was only so far connected with the republic as that, by the constitution itself, this latter was bound to protect it against all violence from foreign or domestic enemies; but from all legal proceedings on the part of the Abderites, and from all subjection to the authority of the State, it was entirely and for ever free. He had therefore done no more than the privileges of his own station demanded when he had sent away the

deputation of the Decemviri. That court, on the other hand, by the illegal steps which at the suggestion of Strobylus they had taken, had put him in a condition to require, in the name of Jason and all the Jasonians, full satisfaction from the republic for the insult offered to his arch-priestly dignity. The matter would probably have more serious consequences than the partisans of Mr. Guildmaster Awl, and Strobylus with his frog-worshippers, anticipated. The golden fleece, which the Jasonians preserved in their temple as their richest treasure, had been for centuries regarded as the palladium of Abdera, and honoured accordingly. The Abderites also would take care neither to do nor to permit any act by which they might be deprived of the protection afforded by such a relic, in which, according to old and universal belief, the welfare and indeed the destiny of their republic were involved.

The arch-priest received, on these observations, the strongest assurances from all present of their zeal for the common welfare as well as for the privileges of Jason's temple. Some desultory conversation took place on the measures to be adopted in order to confirm the people in their good feelings, and to win back those who had

been led astray by the miracle alleged to have recently taken place, or by the complaints of Strobylus about the storks of the arch-priest. The assembly then separated, and every one betook himself to his own affairs, Agathyrsus not forgetting to invite them all to a solemn sacrificial festival which he was about that same evening to celebrate in the temple of Jason.

While these things were going on in the temple of the arch-priest, the archon, in the highest degree dissatisfied with the not very honourable part which against his will he had been made to play, had returned to his own house, and had called together all his relations, sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, cousins, brothers and sisters, and stated to them his irrevocable determination on the following day to lay down his office, as soon as the senate assembled, and to retire to an estate which some years before he had purchased on the island of Thasos. His eldest son and some other members of the family were not present at this meeting, having been sent for half an hour previously to the palace of the arch-priest. As the rest saw that, notwithstanding all their instances, Onolaus held firm to his determination, one of the party slipped privately away

and warned those assembled with Agathyrsus, urging them to do all in their power against so undesirable a resolution.

He arrived just at the moment when the assembly was breaking up. Those who had long known the archon's way of thinking considered the subject much more serious than it appeared at first to the rest. "For ten years," said they, "this is probably the first time that the archon has decided anything of himself. Certainly it is not a hastily-formed conclusion; he must have been long brooding over it in his own mind, and what we hear to-day is only an announcement which at no distant time must have been made to us. One thing is clear, that, as this intended resignation is his own doing, it will not be very easy to get it out of his mind again."

The whole assembly fell into perplexity; they felt that at so critical a period as the present the proceeding could not be other than prejudicial, not only to their faction, but also to the republic itself. It was unanimously resolved that so much of the archon's intention should be made known to the people as would cause fear and uncertainty to affect their minds, and that the most considerable persons of each party should,

before the sacrifice in Jason's temple, wait on the archon, and conjure him, in the name of all Abdera, not to leave the helm of State in the midst of a tempest in which the care of so wise a pilot was especially required. The proposal to unite the heads of both parties in this deputation was the more needful, because it was evident that unless this were done the whole project would fall to the ground; for though Onolaus had from his youth up been a firm adherent of the aristocratic party, he had made it a rule never to be treated as such. The popular manners, which to this end he had long affected, became at last so natural to him as to win him more good-will among the people than any of his predecessors had ever enjoyed, especially since the city had been divided into the two parties of Asses and Shadows, for he made it a point of honour so to behave himself that neither of the two could claim him as their own. Indeed, though nearly all his relations and friends were avowed "*Asses*," yet the Shadows remained in the conviction that they lost, and their adversaries won, nothing by the circumstance. Indeed, the Asses were obliged to hide all their policy from him, lest, as was not impossible, he might think it his duty to

give some advantage to the other side, so as to restore equilibrium, when they had gained any on their own.

The publication of the archon's resolution had all the effect which was expected. The people fell into a new perplexity, and most of them said that nothing more was necessary to accomplish the threat contained in the lamentation of the frogs. If the archon forsook the republic in those difficult circumstances in which it now stood, all was over.

The priest Strobylus and the guildmaster Awl had intelligence of the great feast which Agathyrsus was preparing, and of the archon's resolution at the same time. They saw at once consequences of this twofold blow, and hastened, if possible, to neutralize the one and prevent the other. Strobylus on his part invited the people to a solemn expiation, which was to be performed with great ceremony that same evening in the temple of Latona, to purify the State from the common transgression, and to avert the evil prognostication of the lament uttered by the frogs. The guildmaster visited all the chief councillors, guildmasters, and other principal citizens of his party, and advised with them how they should act so as to change the resolu-

tion of the archon. Most of them were already prepared by the tools of the opposite party to believe that it was purely by the intrigues of the Asses that Onolaus had been induced to determine on resigning, and it was very well known, they said, that the Asses had spared no trouble to confirm him in his resolution. The Shadows were satisfied that their opponents, by this means, expected to raise themselves at once to the greatest consequence in the State, and had already secured a majority in the great council, with which the choice lay.

These considerations occasioned them so much alarm, that, with an immense crowd following them, they hastened away to the dwelling of the archon, and, while the populace raised one cheer after another, most suppliantly besought his excellency to recall his unhappy intention of retiring from office, and never to forsake the people, least of all at a time when his wisdom was indispensable to the tranquillity of the State. The archon showed himself much gratified by this manifest proof of the love and esteem in which he was held by his worthy fellow-citizens. He did not conceal from them that about a quarter of an hour before the greater part of the senate, the Jasonians, and nearly all the

principal families of the city, had waited upon him to prefer the same request in the warmest and most pressing manner; that, whatever reasons he had to be weary of the cares of government, and to wish them devolved on stronger shoulders, yet that he had not the heart to resist so vivid an expression of confidence on the part of all conditions in the State; —he looked on this unanimous feeling in his favour as a good omen for the speedy restoration of the common tranquillity, and he would for his part do all that in him lay to promote so desirable an object.

As soon as the archon had concluded this well-meant address, the Shadows stared at one another with astonishment, and found themselves, to their unspeakable dissatisfaction, wiser by half at least than they were before, for they now saw that they had been deceived by the Asses, and led to place themselves in a false position. They had hoped to gain the archon wholly to their side by the step they had taken, and now found that not only had their opponents proceeded in the same manner, but had even been beforehand with them. Nor was this the most vexatious part of the business. The underhanded conduct of the Asses was an

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evident proof how fully convinced they were that the archon was not unfavourable to their cause. They for their own part had nothing to gain by continuing Onolaus in office, for he had never done the least thing for them. The only reason they had for desiring it was, that they believed that the Shadows would have the greatest influence in electing his successor.

These thoughts flashed on them all at once, and were so amazing that it was with the greatest possible difficulty the poor Shadows could conceal their disappointment, and disperse themselves without his wondering at their haste or noticing the change in their countenances. This day was a great day for the wise and somewhat corpulent Onolaus, and he was now perfectly contented with Abdera. He commanded "not at home" to all visitors, chatted away with the ladies of his family, ate till night, went early to bed, and slept, undisturbed by any cares for the fate of the republic, till far on into the bright morning of the following day.

CHAPTER XII.

The day of decision.—Measures taken by both parties.—The four hundred assemble, and the proceedings commence.—Philanthropic and patriotic dream of the editor of this remarkable history.

THE various machinations which up to this day had been brought into play on both sides had produced their natural effect. The conflict of opinions had brought the public to a kind of fluctuating level, so that when the four hundred assembled they found everything in the same state as nearly as possible as it had been a few days before—that is, that the Asses composed the greater part of the senate, the patricians, and the most considerable and respectable of the citizens, but that the actual numerical majority was on the part of the Shadows. For since the solemn procession to the frog-pools of Latona, which Strobylus had arranged the evening before, and which the people, with the nomophylax Gryllus and the guildmaster Awl at their

head, had very devoutly attended, the *demòs* had fully declared itself for the party of the Shadows. It would have been a very easy matter for the priest Strobylus, had he been so minded, to have taken the opportunity afforded by this procession, and to have caused a revolution in Abdera. He had great influence with the fanatical rabble, and they on their part had more to gain than to lose by a commotion; but besides that he had been expressly charged, in the name of the archon, to keep the masses in order, and to that end to see that the temple and all its approaches were closed by nightfall, the heads of the party were by no means inclined, without the greatest necessity, to do what would deliver up the city to slaughter and pillage. They were wise enough to see, Abderites as they were, that, if once the populace got the reins out of their hands, it would never again be in their power to restrain the blind fury of the many-headed monster.

The guildmaster contented himself, when the procession was over, and the gates of the temple again closed, with saying to the departing multitude that "he hoped all those true Abderites would be found by nine o'clock on the following morning in the forum, to watch over the interests of their fellow-citizen Struthion, and, as

far as in them lay, to help his rightful claims to a legal victory."

This invitation, notwithstanding the moderate and, in his own opinion, cautious terms in which it was couched, was, in fact, nothing more or less than an attempt on the part of the seditious guildmaster to coerce the court, by the immediate danger of a civil commotion, to deliver judgment according to his desire. But then this was the very thing which the Shadows were resolved to do, and as the other party were fully convinced of the fact, they omitted no precautions, and took measures so as to be prepared for the worst. As soon as the court was opened, Agathyrsus defended the approaches to the temple of Jason with a band of tanners and butchers armed with sharp cleavers and good strong cudgels, and in the houses of the principal Asses such preparations were made as though the owners anticipated a siege. The Asses themselves appeared with daggers under their garments, and some of those among them who were given to strong expressions wore armour under their tunics, that they might with greater security oppose their patriotic bosoms to the attacks of the enemies of the good cause. And now the ninth hour had come. All Ab-

dera stood in trembling expectation of the issue of a trial so important and so extraordinary: nobody had taken a regular breakfast, though the whole city had been astir with the day.

The four hundred were assembled on the terrace of the temple of Apollo and Diana, the ordinary place of meeting for the great council under the open sky. This terrace overlooked the forum, and access was obtained to it by a broad flight of fourteen steps. Both the parties to the suit were already in their places with their friends, relations, witnesses, and lawyers, and the whole market-place was densely packed by the expectant multitude, whose inclinations were made known clearly enough by a tremendous shout whenever a senator or a guildmaster of the Shadow party made his appearance.

All were now waiting for the nomophylax, who, in every case where the great council was assembled on subjects which did not immediately concern the constitution of Abdera, was accustomed to preside over its deliberations.

The Asses had indeed used every endeavour to persuade the archon Onolaus to fill with his own portly person the presidential chair of ivory, raised three steps above all the surrounding seats; but though they had urged their re-

quest on the ground that a new law would have to be passed, and that he ought, according to the laws of the constitution, to take the chair, he replied that he would rather lay down his life than adjudicate in so ridiculous a matter as the shadow of an ass, and in the end they were obliged to respect his delicacy.

The nomophylax, who, as a great observer of etiquette, was always on such occasions accustomed to keep everybody waiting for him, had taken it into his head that so solemn an occasion ought to be celebrated by music of his own composition, and which he had prepared as a sort of overture to the proceedings. This, though an innovation, was well received, and had, contrary to the intention of the nomophylax, who meant to excite and stimulate his party thereby, a very soothing effect; for the Asses cracked not a few jokes about the music, which, from time to time, occasioned peals of the heartiest laughter.

One said, "This allegro sounds like a war-song."

"Yes," said another, "in a cock-fight."

"Upon my word," exclaimed a third, "this adagio has very much the air of a funeral march. I wonder whether it is intended to

accompany the dentist and his patrons to the grave?"

"The whole music," said a fourth, "is only fit to be composed by Shadows, and listened to by Asses."

Now, however poor these jokes may be as to wit, yet they were quite sufficient to bring so jovial and light-minded a people into their usual and normal state of mind, a half-comical, whimsical condition, which had taken away all the bitterness from that party-spirit with which they had been so carefully inoculated, and which probably contributed quite as much as anything else to the preservation of the State at this critical juncture.

At last appeared the nomophylax, attended by his body-guard of poor old invalided artisans, all armed with a peaceful kind of rusty swords and blunted halberds.

The appearance of these warriors bore a greater resemblance to the ridiculous figures dressed up as scarecrows to frighten away the birds from an orchard, than to guardians of the public order, whose duty it is to secure reverence to the proceedings of justice. Happy, thrice happy, the State which needs no more formidable defenders for its hearths and homes! The

appearance of this laughable militia, and the absurd and farcical manner in which they behaved themselves in their unwonted warlike trappings—in which, by the way, it had been no easy matter to invest them—gave a new stimulus to the fun of the spectators, so that the criers had a great deal of trouble to bring the crowd to a becoming silence, and to that respect which was due to the highest of their national tribunals.

The president opened the proceedings with a short speech; the crier besought anew silence, and the advocates on both sides were required to set forth orally their plaints and replies. By such as passed for great masters in their art, the opportunity of displaying their skill in so subtle a matter as an ass's shadow must have been regarded as a great privilege.

But when, in addition to this, it is borne in mind that the matter was one which the people had judged to be of so great importance that the republic was actually divided into two factions about it, it is easy to see what motives there were for exertion. Since Abdera had existed there had never been seen a law-suit so ridiculous in itself, yet so momentous through the way in which it had been treated. A syco-

phant could have no genius whatever for his vocation who did not distinguish himself on such an occasion.

So much the more is it to be lamented that the tooth of time, which has devoured so many other illustrious works of human genius, and will, alas! consume so many more, has not spared either of the famous speeches delivered on this occasion. At least it is to be apprehended;—but yet who knows whether some future Layard, or Davis, or Rawlinson, may not discover them written on imperishable marble or yet more imperishable brass, or some future Curzon rescue them from some dusty monastic library in the Greek islands? Should Thrace itself ever fall into the hands of a Christian prince, and that prince take it upon him to become a patron of the arts and sciences, to found academies and to establish societies, then Abdera may have the same happiness which has lately happened to Nineveh, and is now happening to Carthage, and may be thoroughly excavated and investigated. For then this present history of the Abderites, imperfect as it is, will give a clue to much which will be worthy of examination, and, translated into the language of that future and better Thrace, will become a text-

book for the learned in archæology. Then there may be some possibility of finding in the archives of this renowned city the very acts, the original documents of this celebrated cause, and with them both the speeches whose loss we are now deploring. It is at least pleasant to take our flight into the future in this manner on the wings of philanthropic and patriotic visions, and anticipate those blessings which our posterity will enjoy,—blessings which the ever-increasing perfection of art and science seems to make certain, bringing, as such progress cannot fail to do, an enlightenment poured out on the whole human race, a sublimity of thought, a refinement of taste, and a grandeur of moral sentiment.

In the mean time it must be our comfort, that out of the few remaining documents touching this law-suit, we are able to give at least an outline of both these celebrated orations. And as to their genuineness the reader whose intellectual organization possesses a nose, may satisfy himself on that point by the aroma of unmistakable Abderite air which they exhale. This is, after all, the best proof of the authenticity of any work of mortal genius, whether we apply the test to the poems of an Ossian or to the speeches of an Abderite fig-eater.

CHAPTER XIII.

Speech of the sycophant Physignathus.

THE sycophant Physignathus, who, as the advocate of the dentist Struthion, had the right of speaking first, was a man of moderate stature, strong and muscular in configuration, and endowed with the lungs of a Stentor. He valued himself highly on having been a pupil of the renowned Gorgias, and put forth claims to be one of the greatest orators of his time. But even in this respect, as in many others, he was a decided Abderite. His great merit lay in his mode of modulating his voice, so as to give his verbose addresses more vivacity; in his intervals of at least an octave and a half, from one to another of which his voice went skipping about like a chamois on the mountains; and in the manifold gestures and grimaces by which he seemed to endeavour to enlighten his hearers without the necessity of words at all.

In the mean time we must not deny him the

credit, in all the causes which he had hitherto conducted, of having shown ability to puzzle the judges, to make his opponents unpopular, and to give black the appearance of white; nor was he deficient in an effective kind of word-painting, all which the reader will be able to judge by his speech, without any information from us. Physignathus stood up with all the hardihood of an advocate who knows that he has Abderites for hearers, and began:—

"Most noble, honourable, and wise!—Mighty councillors of the republic! If ever there were a day on which the excellency of our constitution shone forth in its fullest glory, and on which I have felt most vividly what it is to be a citizen of the State of Abdera, it is on the present glorious occasion. Before this high and honourable tribunal, before the expectant multitude, before the concourse of respectable strangers whom the fame of so extraordinary a spectacle has gathered together in crowds, a cause is now brought for decision which, in a less free, less skilfully balanced State, such even as Thebes, Athens, or Sparta, would hardly have been considered important enough to occupy the attention even for a moment of the great fathers of the commonwealth. Noble, praiseworthy, thrice-

fortunate Abdera! Thou alone enjoyest a legislation which regards as sacred the smallest and most doubtful rights of thy citizens. Thou alone enjoyest a state of freedom and security of which other republics, whatever advantages they may possess, have only the shadow.

"Tell me, in what other State would a suit between a common citizen and one of the lowest of the people,—a suit which at the first glance seems only to concern the payment of two or three drachmas,—a suit about a thing so slight that the law appears to have totally omitted to declare whether it can be considered as property at all,—a suit about what a subtle dialectician might declare to be not even a thing,—in a word, a dispute about the shadow of an ass!—in what other State, I say, could such a suit come to be the subject of universal sympathy,—an affair of everybody, and indeed, I may venture to say, an affair of the whole State? In what other republic are the laws of property so clearly defined, the rights, or presumed rights, of the citizens so closely guarded from all arbitrary encroachment on the part of the highest personages? Where else can it be said that the slightest claim or demand made by the poorest is weighty in the eyes of Government—that the highest

court of the republic does not deem it beneath its dignity to meet in order to decide on the doubtful right to the shadow of an ass? Woe to the man who sneers at this word, and, out of silly, childish notions of what is great and what is little, can look with a foolish and derisive smile on that which is at once the highest honour of our public justice, the glory of our Government, and the triumph at once of every good citizen and of the whole Abderite commonwealth! Woe to the man, I repeat it a second and a third time, who has no heart to feel this! and all honour to the republic, which, the moment it concerns the rights of citizens, or involves a doubt about the *meum et tuum*—the principle of all civil security—regards even an ass's shadow as no trifle! But while, on the one hand, I feel, with all the warmth of a patriot and all the pride of a true Abderite, how glorious a proof is such a suit of the excellence of our constitution and of the zeal and impartiality of our Government, so, on the other hand, how deeply must I lament this decay of our ancient simplicity,—the fading out of that friendly and neighbourly feeling, that ready tendering of mutual services, which springs out of a good heart, or at least out of a good humour, and would rather lay

aside a part of that which strictly belongs to us than too rigidly exact it! How much must I mourn the extinction of that good feeling, which, had it survived, would have prevented this disgraceful action! How can I, without the blush of shame, carry on the narration? O noble kindness and generosity of our good forefathers! are ye so utterly banished that Abderite citizens, who ought at every opportunity to be willing to share their hearts with each other, out of patriotic love and neighbourly friendship, are become so selfish, so mean, so niggardly, nay, so inhuman, as to quarrel about the shadow of an ass?

"Though—forgive me, worthy fellow-citizens—I am wrong in my expressions; forgive me an unpremeditated error. He who has displayed so rude, so mean, so barbarous a mind, is no fellow-citizen of ours; he is merely a tolerated dweller in our city, a mere *protégé* of Jason's temple, one of the very dregs of the people, a man from whom, by reason of his birth, parentage, and education, nothing better was to be expected,—in a word, an ass-driver, who, besides the ground he treads on and the air he breathes, has nothing in common with us—nothing else save what the wildest tribes of the hyperborean

wastes have with us too. His disgrace rests on him alone—it cannot defile us. A citizen of Abdera, I take on me to say, could not have been guilty of such a crime. But perhaps I call it by too strong a term—a crime? Place yourselves, I pray you, in the position of your fellow-citizen Struthion, and feel! He was travelling on business—business connected with the noble science which he professes, and whose sole object is the alleviation of human sufferings—from Abdera to Gerania. The day was one of the hottest of summer; the glowing heat of the sun seemed to have changed the vault of heaven into that of a baker's oven. No cloud came over those scorching rays, no soft-breathing zephyr refreshed the weary traveller. The sun beamed down on his devoted head, exhausting his frame and breath, and the very marrow of his bones! Suffering from intense thirst, with parched tongue nearly cleaving to the roof of his mouth, and almost blinded with the glare and heat, he sought some shady spot where he might repose —some isolated but compassionate tree, under which he might rest and inhale a mouthful of fresh air, and be sheltered for a moment from the burning arrows of the inexorable Apollo. In vain! You know the whole country between

Abdera and Geränia,—three leagues in length, and, to the shame of all Thrace be it said, no tree, no shrub, for the wanderer's anxious eye to rest upon, amidst the frightful waste of meagre fallows and scarcely less meagre corn-fields!

"The poor Struthion sank down at last beside his beast, almost in a state of insensibility —nature could endure it no longer. He let go his hold of the ass, and sat down in its shadow, —poor miserable refreshment, but, miserable as it was, it was something. And what a monster must the unfeeling, stony-hearted wretch be who could deny to a suffering fellow-creature this scanty solace!—would you believe it possible that such a being could exist, if you did not see him before your eyes? Yes! here he is, and what is still more despicable, still more incredible, than the crime itself, he stands here of his own accord—he seems to glory in his shame; and, that he may leave to none who shall come after him the possibility of rivalling him in insolence, he carries it so far, after having already had a verdict against him by the ordinary courts of the country, as to declare before this right worshipful court of the four hundred, that he is in the right! 'I did not deny him,' says he,

'the ass's shadow, though, according to strict right, I was not obliged to allow him to sit in it: I merely asked him for a reasonable remuneration, that I should give up to him, in addition to the ass which I *had* let him, the shadow which I had not.' 'Wretched, scandalous evasion! What should we think of the man who would forbid a poor half-fainting wayfarer to sit in the shadow of his tree unless he paid for it? or in what terms should we describe the man who would prevent the wearied traveller, dying with thirst, from bathing his parched lips with the water that flowed through his grounds?

"Remember, O men of Abdera, that this alone and no other was the offence of the Lycian peasants, whom the father of gods and men, to avenge a similar piece of inhumanity which these wretches exercised towards his beloved Latona, changed, as an awful warning to posterity, into frogs? This fearful wonder is daily kept in remembrance among us by the holy grove and pool of Latona, the tutelary deity of our city. And thou, Anthrax, thou—a dweller in the State where this dreadful proof of the divine wrath against the rashness of mankind is consecrated by a perpetual worship,—art thou not afraid to bring down that wrath on thyself

by a similar transgression? But thou art trusting in the right of property. He who avails himself of this right, you say, does no man wrong. 'I owe no man more than he deserves of me. If the ass be my property, so is the shadow!'

"Do you say so? And do you believe—or rather does the able and learned advocate in whose hands you have placed the most disreputable case that ever gods or men were called upon to judge,—does he expect, with all the witchery of his eloquence, or with all the webs of sophistical argument he can spin, to circumvent and overpower our understanding to such a degree as to persuade us that a shadow can be reckoned as anything real at all, much less a thing to which a direct and exclusive right can be made out?

"Honourable gentlemen, I should be abusing your patience, and insulting your wisdom, if I were to repeat all the grounds on which I have demonstrated in previous actions the nullity of the plaintiff's claim. I content myself for the present to say, just out of bare necessity, thus much. A shadow cannot, strictly speaking, be reckoned among actual existences at all; for that which makes it to be a shadow is not any-

thing real and positive, but precisely the contrary, namely, the privation of that light which falls on the shadow-giving-body. In the present case, the oblique rays of the sun and the intransparency of the ass (a property which belongs to him not as an ass, but as an opaque body) are the only true causes of the shadow which the ass appeared to cast, and which any other body in the same direction would cast; for the figure of the shadow has nothing to do with the point in dispute. My client has therefore, to speak scientifically, not so much rested himself in the shadow of an ass as in that of an opaque body. Now that that body was an ass, and that ass an intimate acquaintance and, I may say, friend of one Anthrax, a *protégé* of the priesthood of Jason in Abdera, was of just as little advantage to him (Anthrax), as it was of consequence in the matter before the court; for, as I have said, it was not the asinity or asshood, but merely the corporeity and intransparency of the aforesaid ass, which was the cause of the shadow which he seemed to cast.

"But, even if we admit that shadows are things, it is a clear and well-understood fact that they belong to the class of common things,

to which every man has an equal right, and which belong, therefore, rightfully to him who first takes possession of them.

"But I will go further. Even if I admit that not only are shadows things, but that the shadow of the ass belonged to the ass as much as his ears, what will my opponent gain thereby? Struthion hired the ass, therefore he hired the shadow; for it follows, from every contract of letting and hiring, that he who lets gives over to him who hires the thing hired with all that belongs to it, with all its utility and all rights of usage. With what shadow of right, then, can Anthrax require to be paid extra for its shadow? The dilemma is without all contradiction. Either the shadow is a part of and belonging to the ass, or it is not: if not, then Struthion had just as much right to it as Anthrax; if it be, then Anthrax, when he let the ass to hire, let the shadow also, and his present demand is as unreasonable as though a man should first sell me a lute and then expect me to pay for the tunes I played on it. Though why should there be so much argument about a thing which must be as clear to the commonplace sense of mankind as the sun at noonday?

What is the shadow of an ass?—and what shamelessness on the part of Anthrax, since he had no real right in it, to feign one in order to make usurious gain by it! And even if he had a right to it, what unspeakable meanness to deny to a fellow-man—a neighbour and a friend—a thing the very smallest and slightest we can think of, altogether useless in almost every other conjuncture,—to deny this, I say, just at the very moment when it was indispensable to him!

"Noble and ever-honoured judges, let it never be said of Abdera, that such an offence—such a churlish disregard of humanity—could find defenders in a court before which, like that renowned one in Athens, the gods themselves need not blush to refer their causes.

"The rejection of the plaintiff's illegal, unrighteous, and ridiculous plea, his condemnation in all costs and charges which by his self-will and obstinacy he has brought upon the innocent defendant, is the least that I can demand in the name of my client. But still the plaintiff ought to be compelled to give satisfaction—and sufficient satisfaction too—commensurate with the greatness of his offence;—satisfaction to the defendant, whose domestic peace, business, honour, and reputation, have been injured to an

incalculable degree by the plaintiff and his supporters during the course of this litigation;—satisfaction to the honourable Government, from whose judgment pronounced by the ordinary courts he has insolently appealed without ground to this high tribunal;—satisfaction to this honourable court itself, which he has compelled to occupy itself with a cause so contemptible;—and, finally, satisfaction to the whole State and republic of Abdera, which on such frivolous grounds he has placed in circumstances of tumult and disorder.

"Honourable judges, do I ask too much?—do I ask anything unreasonable? See here the whole of Abdera pressing in countless masses on the very steps of this most noble court, and, in the name of a deserving and ill-used fellow-citizen—in the name of the republic itself—seeking, nay, demanding satisfaction. Reverence for authority binds their tongues, but I see flashing from their eyes this reasonable, this not-lightly-to-be-refused demand. The confidence of our citizens, the security of our rights, the restoration of our long-disturbed peace, the continuance of that tranquillity for the future—in a word, the welfare of our whole State—hangs in suspense upon the verdict which you are now

about to pronounce—hangs in anxious and breathless expectation; and as, in the earliest ages of the world, an ass had the honour of awaking the slumbering gods, when the Titans were about to make their nocturnal attack upon them, and thereby saving Olympus itself from ravage and destruction, so now the shadow of an ass may have the opportunity (and may this day be the happy epoch!) of rescuing this great and ancient city from many and terrible dangers.

"Let us hope that it may be the means of cementing the bond between governors and governed, of sinking all past differences in an abyss of oblivion, by vindicating the State by the punishment of a presumptuous ass-driver; and may Abdera flourish for ever!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Reply of the sycophant Polyphonus.

As soon as Physignathus had finished his speech, the people, or rather the mob which crowded the market-place, testified their approbation by a shout so long and so loud that the judges began to fear it would be a permanent hindrance to the proceedings. The party of Agathyrsus fell into some perplexity. The Shadows, on the contrary, though conscious that they made but a minority in the great council, plucked up fresh courage, and premised a favourable result to their cause from the impression which the speech must have made upon the Asses. In the mean time, the guildmaster Awl did his best by signs to bring the people to quietness, and when the herald had made his threefold call to silence, with some effect, forth stepped Polyphonus, the advocate of the ass-driver, a thick-

set, powerfully-built man, with short, crisp hair, and thick coal-black eyebrows. Lifting up a deep bass tone which resounded through the whole forum, he delivered himself as follows:—

"Most mighty judges! Truth and light have this peculiarity above all other things in the world—they want no strange help to make them visible. I yield to my opponent willingly all the advantages which he has endeavoured to obtain by means of his eloquence.

"He who is in the wrong may try to throw dust in the eyes of fools and children by tropes and figures and all the legerdemain of school rhetoric: prudent men are not blinded thereby. I shall not examine how much fame and honour the republic of Abdera may gain through this law-suit about an ass's shadow; I shall neither seek to delude the judges by gross flatteries, nor to influence them by implied threats; still less, by discursive observations, will I seek to give the populace a signal for uproar and sedition—I know why I am here, and to whom I am speaking; in short, I shall content myself with proving that the ass-driver Anthrax is in the right. The judges will then know, without any reminder of mine, what their duty is."

At this passage a few of the mob who stood

nearest on the steps of the terrace began to interrupt the speaker with shouts, yells, and menaces. But when the nomophylax rose from his ivory throne, the heralds again commanded silence, lifted up their partisans threatening-wise, all was still again, and the orator, who did not quite so easily recover the interruption, proceeded with his speech.

"Mighty lords, I stand here not as the advocate of the ass-driver Anthrax, but as the counsel for Jason's temple, and on behalf of the most reverend and noble Agathyrsus, the present arch-priest of the same, guardian of the true golden fleece, and protector of all the interests, things, and persons connected therewith, head and chief of the most noble race of the Jasonians, &c.; and I am, in the name of Jason and his temple, to demand of you that satisfaction be given to the ass-driver Anthrax, *because he has a good right to it*, and I am confident that I shall be able to prove this, notwithstanding all the oratorical tricks which my learned opponent boasts of having acquired from his master Gorgias, and to prove this so clearly that the very blind shall see it, and the very deaf shall hear it. And now, without further preface, to the matter in dispute. Anthrax let out his ass to

the dentist Struthion for the day, not for *any* use he chose to make of it, but to carry him and his saddle-bags from here to Gerania, which, as everybody knows, is eight good miles distant. At the time of hiring the ass, naturally enough neither of the parties thought about his shadow. But when the dentist, in the middle of his journey, dismounted, left the ass, which had, of course, suffered more from the heat than he had, to stand in the sun, and seated himself in the shadow, it was equally natural that the owner and master of the ass should not remain indifferent.

"I admit at once that Anthrax gave a very ridiculous and stupid turn to his claim when he demanded of this jaw-breaker an additional sum on account of the shadow, because, forsooth, he had not let that with the ass; but we must remember that he is only an ass-driver, and the descendant of similar ass-drivers—that is, a man who has been brought up among mere asses, and has really kept more company with such than with reasonable beings. He has, in fact, acquired a sort of right to be very little better than an ass himself. You are not to wonder that his jest should be the jest of an ass-driver; but in what class of animals shall we rank him who turned this jest into earnest?

"If Mr. Struthion had only behaved like a reasonable man, he would have only needed to say, 'Good friend, we won't quarrel about the donkey's shadow. I have not, it is true, hired the donkey to sit in his shadow, but to ride to Gerania, and so it is reasonable enough that I should remunerate you for the few minutes' loss of time which I occasion you, especially as the donkey will have to stand all the longer in the heat, and will not be any the better for it. There, my good fellow, there is half a drachma for you. Let me get a moment's breathing-time, and then, in the name of all the frogs, we will go on our journey again!'

"Now, had the dentist only spoken in this tone, he would have spoken like an honourable and reasonable man. The ass-driver would, for the extra half-drachma, have replied 'By all means,' and the city of Abdera would have been spared all the fame which my accomplished opponent promises her on account of this ass's shadow law-suit, and all the disturbance which must go on to plague and vex her so long as so many distinguished gentlemen, and *ladies* too, are mixed up in the litigation. Instead of which, the man rides his own hobby, claims for himself an unfounded right, by reason of his

contract of hiring, to sit in the shadow of the donkey as long and as often as he pleases, puts the ass-driver in a passion; and all he gets by it is, that the latter goes before the police-magistrate, and makes a complaint, which is just as absurd and unreasonable as the defence. Whether it would not be an exceedingly useful example to slit off the ears of my excellent friend Physignathus, to whose agitation this suit owes its existence, and to whose persuasion it is due that the worthy jaw-breaker did not acquiesce in the pacification proposed by the most worshipful Philippides, and in place of the same to stitch on a pair of ass's ears, in token of the everlasting gratitude of the Abderite republic, and whether it would not be advisable to do the same honour to the guildmaster of the cord-wainers' company, and those gentlemen who have taken the trouble to fling oil upon the fire, —this I leave to the wise consideration of the accomplished judges. My principal, the most reverend arch-priest, will not fail on his part to give the ass-driver Anthrax a cool dozen at the cart's tail for his unutterable and most mischievous folly in all this transaction. This, as his especial judge and superior, he will faithfully promise the republic to do.

"But as this proceeding, however just and proper in itself, does not at all touch the question before the court—viz. the right of the ass-driver against Struthion the dentist, the ill use this latter made of the unlucky beast by sitting down in its shadow instead of riding on its back, and the necessity of some remuneration for the loss of time and additional labour cast on the donkey itself—so the most reverend archpriest demands, on the part of this honourable tribunal, the most complete and entire satisfaction for his humble dependant, and that without further delay.

"To you, gentlemen," he added, turning round his head, and bowing to the people, "permit me to announce in the name of Jason, that all those who in a riotous and turbulent way take part in the offence of the jaw-breaker, until they humbly and penitently make their confession and retractation of the same, are and will be excluded from any participation in those monthly gifts which from the temple of Jason are bestowed upon the poorer citizens.

"I have done."

CHAPTER XV.

Commotion which the speech of Polyphonus occasioned.—Supplementary speech of Physignathus.—Embarrassment of the judge.

The manner in which the case had been stated by Polyphonus had so good an effect, that of the assembled four hundred scarcely twenty could be found who, according to Abderite custom, did not declare that they had seen through the affair from the very beginning; and a few rather energetic expressions were heard against those who had allowed so simple a case to run through such complicated proceedings. The majority seemed, indeed, to agree, not only that the archpriest had a right to demand satisfaction for his dependant, but that a commission ought to be appointed at once by the great council to investigate as closely as possible the whole proceedings, in order to find out who were

the first inciters and promoters of this notorious law-suit. This proposition brought the guild-master, and those who in spite of all consequences still clave to his party, once more on the scene. The sycophant Physignathus again took courage, and obtained from the nomophylax permission once more to speak, on the ground that he had something new to adduce against the reasonings of his adversary; and as this could not be legally refused him, he addressed the court in the following terms:—

"If to treat so distinguished a court as this, high and mighty lords, with that reverence which is due to it, is to be branded with the name of flattery,—a term which my learned opponent has not blushed to apply to it,—I must certainly sit down under an imputation that I can in no way avoid. I think, however, I offend less in my high opinion of this tribunal than he does by imagining it capable of falling into so gross a snare as he has laid for it. The appearance of sound reason which his decided way of putting the case exhibits, and a certain tone which he seems to have borrowed from his client, can at most produce only a momentary surprise; but that they should be able wholly

to overthrow the wisdom of the highest court in Abdera, would be as much cowardice in me to fear, as it would be presumption in him to hope. What! Polyphonus, instead of boldly asserting the justice of his client's case as he did before the city magistrate, now turns round and confesses that the ass-driver has acted stupidly and illegally in founding his complaint against the dentist on any imaginary right of property in the shadow of the donkey; he openly admits that the action is a ridiculous, groundless, and frivolous one, and yet permits himself, and very much in the tone and manner of an ass-driver too, to demand satisfaction! What a new and unheard-of jurisprudence must that be which admits its client to be in the wrong, cannot deny that he deserves a cool dozen at the cart's tail—a punishment which a fellow like Anthrax would take without wincing —promises that he shall have it, and then— demands a verdict!

"Let it be granted that the fault of the ass-driver consisted simply in bringing a wrong action: what is that to his innocent opponent or to the judges? The former must frame his reply according to the complaint, and the latter must judge, not from what might be said

were the case represented to them from a different point of view, but from what is actually brought before them. I promise myself, in the name of my client, that the matter will be decided not according to this new rule which Polyphonus has attempted to establish, and which is totally at variance with all that has hitherto been pleaded on his side, but according to the form and tenor of the complaint itself. The matter in dispute is not the loss of time and the deterioration of the beast, but the ass's shadow. The plaintiff declares that his property in the ass extends to its shadow, and he has not proved it. The defendant asserts that he had acquired as much right to the shadow as the plaintiff, or, in other words, that by his contract of hire he had obtained a right to any advantage which might be gained thereby; and what he asserts he has proved. I stand here, high and mighty lords, and demand a judicial award on that which has hitherto formed the ground of dispute. On that account alone is the matter brought before this supreme tribunal. This alone is what this honourable court has to decide, and I take upon me to say, in the presence of all this listening people, that either justice is not to be found in Abdera, or my

demand is legal; and the rights of every citizen are in peril unless my client can secure his own."

The advocate stopped; the judges were shaken, the people began to murmur again and to become restless, and the Shadows lifted up their heads with hope.

"Now," said the nomophylax, turning to Polyphonus, "what has the plaintiff's counsel to say to all this?"

"Most honourable sir," replied Polyphonus, "nothing, but just word for word what I have already said. This litigation about an ass's shadow is a contemptible litigation, and cannot too soon be brought to a conclusion. The plaintiff has been in the wrong, the defendant has been in the wrong, the city magistrate was in the wrong,—all Abdera has been in the wrong. One would think that some evil wind had blown upon us all, and that our intellects had not been quite so clear as could be wished. If, however, folly prevail, and we are to carry on the absurdity any longer, I should only waste breath to go on speaking from morning till night on behalf of my client and his right to the donkey's shadow.

"But, as I have already said, if the comedy which we have been playing is to be excused

simply because it is comedy, at least it seems to me scarcely respectful that we should go on playing it any longer before so august a tribunal as this. I at least have no instructions to that purpose, and I therefore spare you, most honourable judges, the further repetition of all that I have already said, only entreating you, in the name of the most reverend and learned the arch-priest, now to finish this suit, and to decide as the gods shall direct you."

The judges were in greater perplexity than ever, and it is hard to say what means they would have found to come creditably out of the difficulty, if chance, which from all antiquity has been the tutelary deity of the Abderites, had not taken the decision upon itself, and given this civic drama a *dénouement* which a moment before the wisest of mankind could not have foreseen.

CHAPTER XVI.

Unexpected *dénouement* of the whole comedy, and restoration of tranquillity to the city of Abdera.

The ass, whose shadow had, according to the expression of the archon Onolaus, so singularly obfuscated the brains of the Abderites, was awaiting the issue, still shut up in the public stable, and up to this time was tolerably supplied with fodder. The best that we can say is, that he grew no fatter. One of the ostlers employed by the republic suddenly recollected that the cause was now drawing near to a close, and thought it only right that the ass himself, by no means the least considerable personage in the drama, should be of the party. He was accordingly well groomed, adorned with garlands and ribands, and brought forward, followed by an innumerable procession of jeering street-boys, in great pomp to the place of meeting.

Now, as chance would have it, this ragamuffin procession arrived in the street next to the forum, just at the moment when Polyphonus had ended his harangue, and the judges were in sad perplexity how to decide; the people, too, divided between their reverence for the arch-priest, and the impression which the last speech of Physignathus had made upon them, were in a very similar dilemma.

The uproar made by the street-boys about the donkey here caught their attention; they turned their heads, paused, and then pressed forward.

"Ha!" cried out one of the crowd, "here comes the ass himself."

"He is just in time to help the judges to a decision," exclaimed another.

"That confounded ass!" shrieked a third, "he has brought us all to the very verge of ruin. I wish the wolves had devoured him before he had saddled us with this abominable law-suit!"

"Hurrah!" exclaimed a tinker who had always been a zealous Shadow, "those who are true Abderites, follow me! Down with the donkey! —let not even a hair of his accursed tail be left!"

In a moment the whole assembly flung them-

selves on the poor beast, and before a hand could be raised to prevent the act, it was torn into a thousand pieces. Everybody wanted a bit of the carcase,—they tore, they raved, they fought, they screamed, they panted, they puffed: the like had never been seen in Abdera before. Some were so mad as to devour their morsels without waiting even for the most extemporaneous cookery; but the greater part ran home, followed by a crowd which sought to tear the prey out of their hands. The tumult was quieted as suddenly as it arose; in a few minutes the forum was empty, and as still as midnight.

The four hundred were at the first outbreak of this uproar, the cause of which they could not see, plunged into the greatest consternation. Without knowing what they did, they drew out their daggers from under their robes, where they had slily hidden them for fear of accidents, and the whole assembly stared at one another with no little astonishment, each gentleman, from the nomophylax to the lowest officer, with a glittering dagger in his hand. But when at last they saw and heard what the matter was, they popped their daggers back again as quickly as they could, and burst out, like the gods in the

first book of the Iliad, into a roar of inextinguishable laughter.

"Thanks to Heaven!" cried the nomophylax, as soon as the gentlemen had come to themselves again; "with all our wisdom we could never have brought the matter to a more fitting conclusion. Why should we now puzzle our brains any longer about the affair? The donkey, the guiltless cause of this troublesome action, has been, as usual, offered up a sacrifice to it. The people have cooled their fury in his blood, and we now on our side only want a decent conclusion. This day, which began as though it would have ended badly for the republic, will now, we hope, witness the restoration of tranquillity. As the ass himself is no more, why should there be any longer disputing about his shadow? I therefore propose that this cause be considered at an end, that both parties be paid their expenses out of the public treasury, that an eternal silence be observed about the whole transaction; but, lest our posterity should forget how nearly a flourishing State was brought to destruction by a cause of no greater intrinsic importance than an ass's shadow, I also move that a monument should be erected by the city to the ass himself."

Everybody applauded the motion of the nomophylax, as the wisest which, under the circumstances of the case, could be arrived at. It was calculated to satisfy both parties, and the republic purchased the restoration of peace at a cheap rate. The whole four hundred gave their assent to the proposition, which was thus carried successfully, though it was not without some trouble that Mr. Guildmaster Awl was induced to acquiesce.

The great council, preceded by one troop and followed by another of the civic guard, escorted the nomophylax to his house, where he stopped on the threshold and invited his colleagues, all and sundry, to a monster concert which he intended to give by way of celebrating the return of domestic tranquillity.

The arch-priest Agathyrsus not only forgave the ass-driver the "cool dozen" which Polyphonus had been so kind as to promise him, but presented him with three fine mules out of his own stable, with the especial injunction not to take a single farthing by way of indemnification out of the Abderite treasury.

The following day he entertained all the Shadows (Shadows now no more) of the greater and lesser councils at a sumptuous dinner, and

in the evening he caused a donation of half a drachma to be made to every craftsman in the city to drink to the health of himself and all good Abderites. This liberality won back for him all hearts, and as the Abderites were a people to whom it cost nothing to pass from one extremity to another, it will not be considered extraordinary that in a few weeks the very names of asses and shadows were almost forgotten—so great was the effect of this noble conduct on the part of him who headed the stronger party.

The Abderites themselves laughed over their own folly as a fit of feverish insanity, now, thank the gods! over for ever. One of their ballad-mongers, of whom they had a great many, and very bad ones too, did what he could to put the whole transaction into street-rhymes, that it might be sung up and down highways and byways; and Thlaps the dramatist, of whom honourable mention has been made already, did not fail within a month to prepare a thlapsody on the subject, to which the nomophylax composed the music. This beautiful work was received with every mark of approbation, and both parties laughed at it as heartily as though the matter did not refer to them at all.

Democritus, whom the arch-priest had persuaded to accompany him to the theatre, observed as they went out together, "At least we must allow that the Abderites have one point of resemblance with the Athenians, and that is, that they can heartily and good-humouredly laugh at their own absurdities. It is true they will be none the wiser on this account; but it is always so much gained when a nation can suffer clever and well-meaning people to make merry over its follies, and has the good sense to laugh with them, instead of becoming as spiteful as so many apes."

This was the last play that Democritus attended in his native city, for shortly after, without telling a living soul where he was going, he left Abdera, bag and baggage, and was never heard of again.

BOOK V.

THE FROGS OF LATONA.

CHAPTER I.

First rise of the evil that subsequently caused the destruction of Abdera.—Policy of the arch-priest Agathyrsus.—He causes a frog-pool of his own to be dug.—Nearer and more remote consequences of this new institution.

THE republic of Abdera now enjoyed for some years as complete a quiet as could have been expected. The perilous episode of the ass's shadow had been, thanks to the whimsical genius of the State, safely passed through, and had it been possible for Abderites to remain long in tranquillity, an unbroken calm might have been promised to the city. But there was a hidden cause ever working for their destruction, and all the more to be dreaded as, in place of fearing, they loved and cherished it.

The Abderites, as we have already seen, reverenced Latona as their tutelary divinity. Now, whatever may be objected to the worship of Latona, at least it was one which they had inherited from their forefathers, and in this respect they were certainly not more careless than other Greek republics. It would not be a matter of much consequence whether they worshipped Minerva like the Athenians, or Juno like the Samians, or Diana like the Ephesians, or Venus like the Paphians, or whether they chose Latona: as the case stood, any form of religion was better than none. But the worship of Latona might have been carried on without that of the holy frogs. What necessity was there to prop up the simple faith of their Teïan ancestors by so dangerous a buttress? Why should they keep the frogs of Latona, when they had Latona herself? Or, if their Abderite faith required some visible monument of the change into frogs which the Lycian peasants had undergone, it might have been managed by half a dozen stuffed frogs kept in a glass case, covered with a brocaded cloth, in a chapel of Latona's temple, and solemnly exhibited once a year to the people with suitable ceremonies.

Democritus, their fellow-citizen, had given them a word or two of good caution; but then Democritus was a man whom nobody credited very much, because he had the bad reputation of believing nothing himself. He had told them that it was very easy, especially when frogs were concerned, to be too devout. His ears, after twenty years' absence, were more sensitive to the continual chorus, κεκ-κεκ-κεκ-κοαξ-κοαξ, which resounded night and day about him, than the somewhat thicker and perhaps somewhat longer organs of the other Abderites, not to speak of their being accustomed to the croaking.

Once or twice he had spoken sharply against their "*batracholatry*," as he called it, and, partly in jest, partly in earnest, had prophesied to them that unless they took proper precautions their croaking fellow-citizens would in time croak them all out of the town. The aristocracy might on this point joke as they liked, for they were not desirous of being considered believers in the frogs of Latona more than Democritus himself.

But the mischief was, that he never could, either by satire or serious advice, bring them to look at the matter from a reasonable point of view. If he joked, they joked with him: if he

spoke seriously, they joked at him, and wondered that he could be serious about such a matter; and thus, notwithstanding every objection, things remained in Abdera in this respect, just as in every other, *in statu quo*. Nevertheless, in the time of Democritus, a certain laxity of belief and practice was evidently gaining ground among the younger nobles of Abdera. The priest Strobylus complained bitterly that in the best houses the frog-pools, which their ancestors had carefully kept up in their gardens, the present holders were sadly neglecting. The common people alone held fast in this respect to the laudable old customs, and showed their reverence for the holy pool by voluntary contributions towards its sustentation.

Now who would have supposed that of all the Abderites the very last man on whom any suspicion of batracholatry would have fallen—viz. the arch-priest Agathyrsus himself—should have been the man who, after the settlement of the feud between the Asses and Shadows, stirred up the cooling zeal of his fellow-citizens on behalf of the frogs?

It would perhaps be impossible to exculpate him in this step from an inconsistency between his internal convictions and his external con-

duct; and if we had not some clue to his mode of thinking in other matters, this last would be quite inexplicable. But we know that the archpriest was naturally a very ambitious man. He had seen himself during the late tumults at the head of a considerable party, and he had no inclination to exchange this advantage for anything less than an enduring influence over the whole State, now happily restored to tranquillity.

This he could only attain by an overwhelming popularity and a certain concession to the prejudices of the multitude, which was to him so much the easier, as he regarded religion merely as a political engine. Like many of his class, it was to him a matter of perfect indifference what the object of reverence might be—frogs, or owls, or fleeces: that to him was best which offered to him the wisest and readiest means of satisfying his darling passion.

To this end, and to retain in the cheapest manner the esteem and favour of the people, he not only banished the storks of which the guardians of the holy pool had complained from all the precincts of Jason's temple, but he carried his concessions to his new friends so far as to cut a canal through an esplanade which one of his ancestors had consecrated to the use of the

people, and filled it with frog-spawn, brought in casks out of the holy pool. This he had obtained by a most courteous application to Strobylus, who accompanied the casks and witnessed the transportation himself, followed by all the idle rabble of Abdera. It may be mentioned by the bye, that Agathyrsus made a handsome offering to the temple of Latona by way of compensation.

From this time forward Agathyrsus was the idol of the people. A frog-trench dug just at the right moment had done for him what all his eloquence, liberality, courtesy, and policy would not have accomplished in half a century. He reigned as absolutely as a king in Abdera, without ever entering the council-chamber; and because he entertained two or three times a week all the senators and guildmasters at sumptuous dinners, and only insinuated his commands in full bumpers of the finest Chian wine, nobody ever dreamed of objecting to so amiable a tyranny. The gentlemen of the council never imagined that their principles were not their own, though, in fact, their notes were only the echoes of the dining-room of Agathyrsus. He was himself, it is true, the first among trusty friends to make merry over his new frog-moat;

but then the people heard nothing about that, and as, among the nobles of Abdera, his example had more effect than his jokes, it was amusing to see how the old trenches in all gardens were reopened, and new ones cut where there were none before.

In this remarkable city all follies were contagious: before long nobody was free from this new one. At first it was only a fashion, a thing which belonged to good society: a citizen of substance would have thought it a disgrace to be behind his wealthy neighbours. But unconsciously it grew to be a requisite of good citizenship, and the man who could not show his frog-pond within four palings would have been regarded as an enemy of Latona and a traitor to his country. When the zeal of private persons waxed so warm, it is not to be expected that less would be displayed by the senate, the guild-masters, and the dignitaries of state. Each guild had its own frog-pool. In every open place in the city, even before the senate-house, where the cabbage and oyster women made noise enough before, were basins constructed for the croaking race; and the college of ediles, which had especially the charge of beautifying the city, at last hit upon the ex-

pedient of cutting small canals through the groves by which Abdera was encompassed, and giving them up as a new possession to the frogs.

The plan was brought before the senate and passed without opposition, although it was avowedly necessary to drain the river Nestus to supply all these frog-reservoirs with water. Neither the cost of all these operations, nor the manifold evils occasioned by the diminution of water in the river, seemed to excite any attention; and when a young member of the council observed that the river Nestus was become little better than a marsh, "So much the better," said one of the guardians of the frogs; "we shall have a trench the more without its costing the republic a farthing."

Those who derived the most benefit from this fancy of beautifying a city by means of frog-ponds were the priests of Latona. For though they sold the spawn out of the holy pool very cheaply, viz. for the Abderite cyathus (*i. e.* about a pint of our measure) only two drachmas, yet it was calculated that during the first two or three years, when this enthusiasm was at its height, they had cleared more than five thousand darics. The sum seems too high for probability, although it is not to be denied that

for the spawn which they supplied to the State they received twice as much out of the public chest.

Nobody in Abdera troubled himself about the consequences of these petty institutions. The consequences came, however, nevertheless. But because they did not make their appearance all at once, not only were they not looked for, but, when they were too evident to be ignored any longer even by Abderites, even then they were not recognized as coming from the source which has been indicated.

The physicians puzzled their wits to find out why colds, rheumatisms, headaches, and agues increased from year to year—why they were so much more obstinate than of old—why, in fact, they bade defiance to all the skill of Abdera and all the physic of Anticyra. In short, Abdera and the whole region round-about was being fast converted into one unsightly, unhealthy frog-marsh; nor had it yet occurred to any one of their philosophers to inquire whether the unlimited multiplication of frogs might not perhaps be so prejudicial to a State as to more than counterbalance all the advantages which the piously-disposed expected to obtain from it.

CHAPTER II.

Character of the philosopher Korax.—History of the academy of sciences at Abdera.—Korax lays before that body a captious question concerning the frogs of Latona.—He sets himself up as the head of the Anti-froggites.—Behaviour of the priests of Latona towards this sect, and how they were induced at last to believe them to be harmless.

The remarkable genius who first made the observation that the number of frogs in Abdera was really excessive and bore no proportion to that of the unfeathered and two-legged inhabitants, was one Korax. He was a young man of good family who had resided for some years at Athens, and in the academy, as the school of Plato was generally called, had imbibed some notions not altogether favourable to the frogs of Latona: to say the truth, Latona herself had, since his residence in Athens,

sunk so much in his opinion, that it is scarcely to be wondered at if her frogs received less reverence from him than might be desired from a true Abderite. "Every beautiful woman is a goddess," he was accustomed to say, "at least a goddess of hearts, and Latona was undoubtedly a very beautiful woman. But what has that to do with frogs? and what, looking at the matter from a merely human and reasonable point of view,—what have the frogs to do with Latona? And granted also that the goddess, for whom, by the bye, I entertain all respect due to a beautiful woman and a goddess to boot,—granted, I say, that the goddess had chosen these frogs above all other reptiles and vermin in the world to be her peculiar pets, does it therefore follow that we cannot have too many frogs?"

Korax was, at the time when he began thus to reason, a member of the academy which had been established in Abdera in imitation of that at Athens; for the Abderites, as we have had occasion to remark before, were quite determined to have everything that the Athenians had. This academy was a little grove planned out in walks, and situated close to the city; and as it was under the protection

of the senate, and had been laid out at the cost of the State, the college of ediles had not neglected, according to their plan of beautifying the city, to provide it abundantly with frog-pools. The members of the academy frequently found themselves disturbed in their deepest meditations by the croaking chorus of these noisy melodists. But as this would have been the case just the same in any other part of Abdera, they bore it the more patiently; or perhaps, to speak more accurately, everybody in Abdera was so accustomed to the croaking of the frogs that they heard it no more than the inhabitants of Niagara do the great fall in the vicinity of which they live, or than the neighbours of any other waterfall in the world.

But with Korax, whose ears, by his residence at Athens, had recovered their usual susceptibility, the case was different. It will not seem strange that he made the most pointed observations on the nuisance at the first meeting which he attended: he remarked that the screech-owl of Minerva was better qualified as an extraordinary member of the academy than the frogs of Latona.

"I do not know," said he, "what you think

of it, gentlemen; but it seems to me that the frogs have increased in an intolerable degree lately here in Abdera."

The Abderites were a stupid people, as we all know, and, with the exception of one far-famed nation, there were probably none in the world which could rival them in the faculty of not seeing the wood on account of the trees. But this much must be conceded to them, that when one among their number stumbled upon an observation that anybody else might have made before him, but did not make, they awoke as out of a sleep, marvelled very much at the discovery, and considered themselves greatly obliged to him who had made it.

"Indeed," said the gentlemen of the academy, "the frogs have for some time past increased in a very astonishing manner."

"When I say," replied Korax, "in an intolerable degree, I do not wish to be understood as implying that there is anything unnatural about it. In fact, nothing is more to be expected than that frogs should increase in a monstrous ratio when such measures are taken for their support. The only thing incredible, in my opinion, is that a people should be found so simple as to permit it."

The assembled members of the academy started at the freedom of this speech, and seemed a little perplexed what to think of the matter.

"I speak only from a human point of view," said Korax.

"We do not doubt it in the least," replied the president of the academy, who was also a senator and one of the Decemviri; "but the academy has made itself a law not to touch on such delicate topics, on which reason may be so easily misled."

"The academy at Athens has made no such law," added Korax boldly; "if philosophy is not to touch on all things, it would be better for it to touch on—nothing at all."

"On all things," said the president, with a significant gesture, "but not on Latona and——"

"Her frogs," added Korax with a smile. This was really what the president intended to say, but with the word "and" there came over his mind a kind of suspicion that he was about to utter a folly, and so he stopped suddenly with his mouth open, and left Korax to finish the sentence for him.

"Such a thing may be regarded from various

points of view, and in different lights," said Korax, "and to do this is, as it seems to me, exactly what is becoming for a philosopher, and that which distinguishes him from the unthinking multitude. Our frogs, for example, may be considered first simply as *frogs*, and then as *frogs of Latona*. Now, so far as they are merely frogs, they are no more than other frogs. Their relation towards the people of Abdera is exactly the same as that of all other frogs to all other men, and thus far nothing can be more innocent than the inquiry whether the number of frogs is or is not in due proportion to the number of men; and, if it should appear that the State is nourishing more frogs than are needful, to deliberate upon the means through which the unreasonable number may be diminished."

"Korax speaks reasonably," said some young academicians.

"I touch on the subject only according to human reason," replied Korax.

"I would rather," answered the president, "that you would not touch on it at all."

This was the first speech which Korax flung into the inflammable brains of some speculative young Abderites. Unobserved he became the head and mouthpiece of a sect whose theories

and opinions were not looked upon in Abdera as one whit too orthodox. They were blamed, and with good reason, for not keeping their views to themselves, but, in public places and assemblies of the people, asserting that it might be doubted whether the frogs of Latona were anything more than common frogs after all. The saying that they were descended from the peasant-frogs, or frog-peasants of the Lycians, was nothing more than a silly legend; and a man might doubt the tradition itself, that Jupiter had changed the peasants into frogs in consequence of their insolence and cruelty to Latona, without therefore sinning against either Jupiter or Latona.

However that might be, it was certainly absurd, out of devotion to the beautiful Latona, to make the whole city and republic of Abdera fall into a frog-marsh. But what was more than all these arguments, was the title which was taken by Korax and his followers,—a title which would seem to have very little meaning in our day, but then, and in Abdera, and especially in the ears of the priests of Latona, it had a most ominous sound: it was that of Batrachomachistæ, or *Anti-froggites!* This title was the less unpleasing to those who bore it, because nearly all the

young and fair in the city were soon infected with their opinions. The priests of Latona's temple, and the college of frog-guardians, did not fail on every opportunity to show their dissatisfaction at the self-will and impiety of the Anti-froggites. And the new high-priest Stilbon —for Strobylus had been dead for some years— enlarged his book on the antiquities of Latona's temple by a long chapter on the nature of Latona's frogs. In the meanwhile, there was the more reason for him to be satisfied with the existing state of things, since, in spite of the free-thinking spirit which Korax had originated in Abdera, there was not one single frog-pond less in the city and the neighbourhood.

The philosopher and his friends were cunning enough to perceive that they could not more cheaply purchase the permission to think what they pleased about the frogs, than by doing exactly as other people did. Indeed, the wise Korax, as the person on whom all eyes were fixed, thought it better to do too much than too little. He accordingly, soon after his speech in the academy, caused to be dug on his own patrimonial estate one of the finest frog-trenches in all Abdera, and filled it with fat frogs out of the holy pool, for each of which he paid to the

priests no less than four drachmas. This was a courtesy for which these gentlemen, however little they felt bound to him in their hearts, could not fail on account of the example to appear grateful, especially as this act of the so-called philosopher gave sufficient pretence for them to say that in his irreligious talk about Latona and her frogs he was not really in earnest. "His tongue is worse than his heart," said they; "he wishes it to be thought that he is too clever to think like other people, but after all it is mere affectation. If he were not really convinced of the truth, he would not let his actions contradict his theories in the way he does. We must not judge such people according to what they say, but according to what they do."

Notwithstanding all this, Korax had undertaken no slighter labour than, like a new Hercules, Theseus, or Harmodius, that of delivering his country from the frogs, by which, as he was accustomed to say, it was threatened with a greater evil than all those which the robbers, tyrants, and monsters slain by the before-mentioned heroes, had brought upon Greece of old.

CHAPTER III.

An unfortunate accident compels the senate to notice the immense increase of frogs in Abdera.—Imprudence of the counsellor Meidias.—The majority seek the opinion of the academy. The nomophylax Hypsiboas protests against this measure, and urges the high-priest Stilbon to prevent such a proceeding.

The inconveniences which the Abderites suffered from the prodigious increase of their sacred frogs became still more pressing day by day; but the archon Onocradias (nephew of the renowned Onolaus, and, to say the truth, one of the emptiest heads that ever ruled in Abdera) never would have thought of bringing the matter before the senate had it not been for a very distressing accident. It happened, on the day of a certain great procession when the crowd in the principal streets was very great, that a few dozen frogs which had wandered

out of their ditches got trodden down by the people, and, in spite of all that could be done to rescue them, they departed this life under singularly unpleasant circumstances.

This mishap appeared so considerable that the archon felt obliged to convene an extraordinary meeting of the senate, first to inquire what satisfaction on the part of the city would be necessary to Latona, to atone for this unintentional, but not the less frightful sacrilege, and secondly, how so melancholy an occurrence could be prevented in future.

After the usual Abderite common-places had been uttered, Meidias, a relation and adherent, rose and said, "I don't understand why gentlemen should make so much ado about a half-bushel of frogs more or less. Everybody knows full well that the thing was a mere accident, at which Latona cannot possibly take offence: and as the fates which preside over gods, men, and frogs, have allowed some four-and-twenty croakers to come to an untimely end, all I can say is, I wish it had been four-and-twenty myriads."

There were not perhaps five persons in the whole senate who, in the bosom of their families or in private society, had not complained a

thousand times at least over the incredible increase of the frogs; but now that the matter was the subject of conversation in the senate, everybody started at the boldness of Meidias: it was as though he had taken Latona herself by the throat. Some gentlemen looked quite as frightened as though they expected to see their colleague, for his rashness, changed into a frog himself before their eyes.

"I pay all due respect to the holy pool," proceeded Meidias, quite calmly (he had noticed all the effect of his previous speech), "but I appeal to the inner consciousness of all men whose common sense is not entirely exhausted, whether any one could deny without blushing that the number of frogs in Abdera is perfectly monstrous."

The senators had in the mean time recovered from their first alarm, and as they saw that Meidias sat there in his own form, and had dared to say with impunity what they all felt at bottom to be perfectly true, they began to consider one after another what the state of the case really was, and after a while it appeared to be the opinion of the whole senate that "it could be wished there were fewer frogs in Abdera!"

"No one is secure in his own house from them," said one.

"Nobody can walk in the streets," remarked another, "without running the risk of crushing half a dozen at every step."

"It is quite right," observed a third, "to have frog-ponds, but the privilege has its limits."

A fourth attested, "Had I been in the senate when it was resolved to have open frog-ponds, I certainly would not have given the measure my support."

"But who," exclaimed a fifth, "would have supposed that the frogs could multiply in such a portentous manner?"

"I could well enough," said the president of the academy, "but I had made up my mind to live at peace with the priests of Latona."

"So had I," said Meidias, "but our circumstances are none the better through that."

"And now, gentlemen, since things are so, what is to be done?" asked the archon Onocradias, in his usual shuffling tone.

"There lies the difficulty," replied the senators all at once.

"If anybody would only tell us what is to be done!" exclaimed Meidias hastily, and

then suddenly stopped. A deep silence followed; all the senators dropped their heads on their breasts, twisted their features into an appearance of meditation, and began to reflect with all their might.

At last the archon broke silence. "And pray what have we an Academy of Sciences for?" exclaimed he, to the unutterable bewilderment of his colleagues, for no man, since his accession to the archonate, had ever heard him express himself by any figure of speech.

"The suggestion of your Excellency is invaluable," answered Meidias; "I move that the question be proposed to the academy, by which means——"

"That is exactly what I mean," interrupted the archon; "what good is an Academy of Sciences to us, if we are to sit and puzzle our brains about such subtle questions as this?"

"Admirable!" all at once cried half a dozen stout senators, patting their smooth foreheads with their soft hands—"admirable!" The academy shall give us an opinion on the subject."

"One moment, gentlemen," said Hypsiboas, one of the heads of the republic, for he was at the same time nomophylax, first curator of the

holy frogs, and a member of the Council of Ten,—notwithstanding all these offices there was scarcely a man in all Abdera who took less interest in Latona and her frogs than he did. But, because, at the last election of archon, the Jasonian Onacradias had been preferred to him, he had made it a principle, in every possible respect, to be on the contrary side to the new archon. It was consequently attributed to him by the Jasonians and their friends, that he was a turbulent demagogue, and wanted only to make a party in the senate to oppose all acts and motions of the Jasonians, who for some time past had been, in truth, the predominating race.

"I pray you, gentlemen," said Hypsiboas, "do not be in too great a hurry. This matter does not belong to the academy; it belongs to the College of Frog-guardians. It would be contrary to all good order, and an intolerable insult besides to the priesthood of Latona, if a question of this nature and importance were submitted to the academy."

"It concerns no mere question of frogs, honourable Mr. Nomophylax," answered Meidias, with his usual sarcastic coolness. "Alas! since the admirable regulations which for some years

past have been observed, it has become a question of state."

"And perhaps the weightiest that has ever rendered necessary a calling together of our country's brightest intellects," interposed Stentor. Stentor possessed the hottest head in the republic, and by means of his thundering voice he could do much in the senate. The Jasonians had brought him, plebeian as he was, on their side by marrying him to a natural daughter of the late arch-priest Agathyrsus, and from time to time they made good use of his voice, when they wanted to get up an opposition in the senate to the nomophylax Hypsiboas, who had a voice quite as strong, though not as thundering. It was well for the Abderite senators on these occasions that the perpetual chorus of croaking, to which they had become accustomed, had made their hearing a little thicker than usual —they would otherwise have run no small risk of having the drums of their ears broken outright. But in the senate-house of Abdera such refinements were common, and both screamers were allowed to roar against each other till hoarseness prevented their roaring any longer. At this moment, however, there was no particular reason for listening to either of them, and accordingly

the archon asked the secretary what o'clock it was; and on receiving the assurance that it was near dinner time, he put the question to the vote at once.

Here, it must be remembered, that a resolution was never carried because the grounds on which it was made appeared to the voters the most satisfactory, but they did for the most part assent to the opinion of those who shouted the loudest and spoke the last, unless, as it frequently happened, the thing were a party question, and then every man voted according to his party.

Now the party of the archon was generally the strongest, but on an occasion like this, which the president of the academy very properly called a most delicate one, Onocradias would with difficulty have carried his point, had it not been for the extraordinary use which Stentor made of his lungs. It was resolved by twenty-eight voices against twenty-two that a report should be requested from the academy, through what means the overwhelming multitude of frogs in and about Abdera, (without prejudice to Latona and the rights of her temple,) might in some degree be restrained. The Senator Meidias had caused this clause to be inserted either to propitiate the nomophylax and his

party, or at least to take away from them all pretext for setting the people against the Government; but the nomophylax and his followers were not people to be led by the nose by means of a clause. They entered a protest against the decision; they demanded an attested copy, and carried it in procession to the high-priest Stilbon. They informed him of the encroachment thus made on the rights of the College of Frog-guardians, and on those of Latona's temple, and proceeded to take counsel with him as to those measures which ought to be adopted in their defence.

CHAPTER IV.

The high-priest Stilbon.—His character and manner of life.—Interview between the priests of Latona and the minority in the senate.—Stilbon looks at the matter from his own point of view, and goes to make his sentiments known to the archon.—Remarkable conversation among those who remained behind.

THE present high-priest, Stilbon, was the third who had held that high office since the decease of the venerable Strobylus (may his ashes rest in peace!). In the character of these men there was one strong point of resemblance, however different they were in almost every other respect: that one was a great zeal for the interests of their order. Stilbon, from his boyhood, had loved solitude; he would frequently ramble away into the most unfrequented parts of Latona's forests, or sit for hours in the most secret recesses of her temple, wrapt in deep

meditation; and as to the subjects of his contemplation, the more removed they were from the ordinary business of life, the less intelligible to the ordinary intellects of mankind, the more acceptable they were to our recluse. Like an unwearied spider, he ever sat in the centre of his web of word and thought, busy in spinning out the small store of ideas which he had treasured up in his uneventful life, and within the narrow circle of Latona's temple. And he did spin them into such fine threads, that he might have tapestried with them the innumerable cells of his brain over and over again.

But, besides these metaphysical speculations, he had greatly occupied himself with the antiquities of Greece, Thrace, and especially Abdera; and above all with the histories of those continents, islands, and peninsulas, which, according to ancient tradition, were once there, but were now there no longer. The worthy man knew not one word about what was going on in his own time, and still less of what was going on fifty years ago: indeed, the city of Abdera itself, at the end of which he lived, was less known to him than Memphis or Persepolis. But perhaps he was all the more on this account at home in the old Pelasgian land. He knew what

every nation, every race, every little tribe, was called before it bore its present appellation; could tell by whom was built every temple now lying in ruins; and had at his fingers' ends all the succession of kings from the flood of Deucalion downwards; he could name them as they sat in their little gates and administered justice to all those who were not in a condition to administer it to themselves—the famous island of Atlantis was as well-known to him as though he had seen with his own eyes all its lordly palaces, temples, and theatres; and he would have been inconsolable if any scholar could have pointed out an error in his thick book on the wanderings of the isle of Delos, or in any other of those thick books which he had written on equally interesting subjects. Notwithstanding all this pedantry, Stilbon was really a learned man; but in everything which concerned the real business of life, he was not only extremely simple, but, however little he suspected the truth, one of the most limited of mankind.

His notions on human business were altogether impracticable, because he was never ready with the right word at the right time. He judged always obliquely about that which stood straight before him, came to logical conclusions upon

incorrect premises, marvelled greatly over the most natural events, and was ever expecting favourable results from measures which must infallibly frustrate his intentions. His head was, and remained as long as he lived, the rendezvous of all popular prejudices. The silliest old woman in Abdera was not so credulous as he was, and, however strange it may seem to the reader, he was probably the only man in the whole city who with all his heart believed in the frogs of Latona. In spite of all these defects, Stilbon was universally respected as a right-minded and peace-loving man; and if those negative virtues which arose from his mode of life, kind of study, and position in society, were reckoned to him as merits, why then Stilbon was better than most of his fellow-citizens. These latter imagined him to be a man without passions, because they saw that none of those things which excited the desires of other people had any effect upon him. But they did not reflect that he set no value on those things, either because he did not know them, or because by his habits of solitude and meditation, he had learned to treat them with an utter indifference and disregard.

But all the while the worthy Stilbon *had* one

passion which by itself was quite as calculated to produce disturbance in the State as all those from which he was free—a passion for his own opinions. Thoroughly convinced himself of their correctness, he could not imagine how it was possible that a man with his five senses, and an ordinary portion of human reason, could come to any other conclusions. When, however such an event did force itself on his notice, he only saw two alternatives by which it might be accounted for: one was, that the person in question must be out of his senses; the other, that he was a wicked, deliberate, and envenomed enemy of the truth, and therefore a man to be despised, abhorred, and avoided. This mode of thinking made Stilbon, with all his virtues, a very dangerous man in Abdera; and he would have been much more so, were it not that his indolence and his invincible love of seclusion stood a little in the way. As it was, he seldom thought any thing that went on around him worthy of his notice at all.

"I never heard complaints that we had too many frogs," said Stilbon, quite coolly, as soon as the nomophylax had finished his representation.

"That is not the subject of our conversation,

most reverend sir," replied the other; "on that point the senate is pretty well of one mind, and indeed all the people too. But what we have to consider is the propriety of referring to the academy such a question as this, 'By what ways and means can the unreasonable number of frogs be reduced?'"

"And has the senate made such a requisition to the academy?" asked Stilbon.

"Why, yes—did you not hear?" answered Hypsiboas, rather impatiently. "That is the very thing that we have come to tell you."

"In that case the senate has taken a step which does not display its usual wisdom," replied Stilbon, in as calm a tone as before. "Have you brought the decree with you?"

"Here is a copy of it."

"Hem! hem!" said Stilbon, and shook his head, after having carefully perused it two or three times. "Here are almost as many absurdities as words. They must first prove that there *are* too many frogs in Abdera. Now this can never be proved, for, in order to ascertain what is too much, we must first accurately define what is enough, and this would be impossible for us to know, even if the Delphian Apollo, or his mother, Latona herself,

were to vouchsafe us an oracle for the purpose. The thing is clear enough; for, as the frogs are under the immediate influence and protection of the goddess, it must be impious, as well as unreasonable, to say that there can ever be more of them than agrees with her pleasure. Not only does the matter not require, but it does not admit of any investigation. But in the second place, if it be granted that there *are* too many frogs, yet it is absurd to consult about ways and means to diminish their number; for *there are no such means*, at least none that stand within our reach, which is just the same as though there were none at all. Thirdly, it is unreasonable to make such a requisition to the academy. For not only has the academy no right to decide upon such weighty and important subjects as this; but it consists, as I fear, almost entirely of witlings and poetasters, who do not understand such matters as this at all; and, as a proof that they do not, I am given to understand that they are silly enough to sport and jest about them. I am willing to hope that these poor people have so acted out of ignorance. Let them read with attention my book on the antiquities of Latona's temple, and then they must either be destitute of common sense, or else open

enemies of all that is good, if they do not at once admit the truth which I have there laid down as clearly as if it were written with a sunbeam. This decree of the senate is therefore thoroughly absurd, and can consequently be of no effect, for to say of a thing that it is absurd, is as much as to say that it is not a thing at all. You may just tell honourable members this at their next meeting—'second thoughts are best'—and I am sure they will come to a better decision, and, then, most worshipful Mr. Nomophylax, I think the best thing we can do will be to let the matter rest."

"We all know," answered the nomophylax, "that you are a profoundly-learned man; but do not be offended if I say that about worldly business your reverence understands just nothing at all. The majority in the senate have come to a conclusion which is prejudicial to the rights of the Decemviri. In the mean time the rule that the will of the majority is law will obtain in this as in all other decrees, and the archon will have put it into execution before I could impress your logic upon the members of the next session, even if I were inclined to undertake such a task at all."

"Speculative things, like this," said Stilbon,

"do not depend on the number, but on the wisdom of those who discuss them."

"Admirable, most reverend sir,—admirable! —the wisdom, yes the wisdom is always in the right. But now the question is, how are we to manage so as to secure that right to it? we must devise some effective means to postpone the execution of this decree."

"I will at once," replied Stilbon, "send to his excellency the archon my book on the antiquities of Latona's temple; for in the chapter on the frogs all that can be said on the subject is set in the clearest light."

"The archon," put in one of the deputation, "never read anything in his life except the Abdera *Daily News*. This plan will be of no use, that I will warrant you."

"So much the worse!" rejoined the priest; "what times do we live in if such a statement as this can be true—if the chief magistrate of our city sets such an example! But I can hardly believe that things are so bad as that."

"You are too innocent, my reverend friend," said the nomophylax. "But we may pass over that matter; it would be well for Abdera if that were the worst fault of the archon."

"I see only one means by which the thing

can be done," said one of the priests, Pamphagus by name. "The venerable college of the Decemviri is above the senate; consequently——"

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed a senator of the deputation, "not above the senate, for——"

"You did not allow me to finish my observation," replied the priest, somewhat irritated. "The Decemviri are not above the senate in matters of justice and state policy; but as all matters in which Latona's temple is concerned must be heard by the Decemviri, and as, from their decision there is no appeal, it follows that ——"

"They are not above the senate," interrupted a third, "for the senate does not concern itself with the affairs of Latona, and cannot therefore come into collision with the Decemviri."

"So much the better for the senate!" said the priest; "but when the senate does take upon itself to decide concerning a matter, which, to say the least, trenches very closely on the rights of Latona's temple, as seems to be the case in the present instance, I see no other solution of the difficulty than the calling together of the Decemviri."

"The archon only can do that," said Hypsi-

boas, "and he naturally will hesitate to take such a step."

"Not if he be required to do so by the College of the Priests."

"I am not of your opinion, my reverend colleague," interrupted Stilbon; "it would be beneath the dignity of the Decemviri, and contrary to precedent, if we were to assemble that body on such ground as the present. It can only be convened when some injury is done to religion; but where is the injury here? The senate has passed an absurd act—that is all. It is bad, but not bad enough. You cannot prove that the Decemviri can censure the senate merely for passing absurd decrees."

The priest Pamphagus bit his lips, and whispered something into the ear of the nomophylax. Stilbon, without heeding this, proceeded:—

"I will at once go to the archon and take him my book on the antiquities of Latona's temple; he shall read the chapter about the frogs. It is impossible that this can fail to show him the absurdity of the decree."

"Go, then, and success go with you," said the nomophylax.

The high-priest went away at once, his thick book under his arm.

"What a head it is!" said the priest Pamphagus as soon as his head was turned.

"He is a very learned man," observed the senator Precephalus, "but——"

"Learned! What do you mean by learned?" asked Pamphagus. "Learned in trifles that no one on earth cares a fig about."

"Your reverence no doubt understands that matter much better than I, for I know nothing about it; but it has always seemed a strange thing to me, that a man with the reputation of so much erudition should be as simple as a child in all matters of business."

"It is unfortunate for Latona's temple," said another of the priests.

"And for all the State," added a third.

"I am not quite so sure of that," replied the nomophylax, with a sarcastic sneer; "we must take what we can get, and be thankful. But it seems to me that you gentlemen are all of one opinion—that the Decemviri must be convened."

"And the more so," observed one of the deputation, "as we are tolerably sure to find there a majority against the archon."

"If we cannot help ourselves in some better way, I must be contented," said Hypsiboas;

"but could we not do better now that we have Latona and her priests on our side? Do not we comprise nearly half of the whole body? We were only beaten by a majority of six, and if we hold fast together——"

"That we will!" cried all the deputation with one voice.

"An idea has struck me, gentlemen," observed the nomophylax, "but until I have matured it a little I will not develope it. Select two or three of your number, and we will talk over the matter this evening more fully at my villa. We shall hear in the mean time what success the high-priest has had with the archon Onocradias."

"I will wager my head against a melon," said Charix, one of the priests, "that he will only make bad worse."

"So much the better," replied the nomophylax.

CHAPTER V.

What passed between the high-priest and the archon.—One of the most instructive chapters in all this history.

WHILE the conversation recorded in the preceding chapter was being carried on in the residence of the high-priest, this latter had betaken himself to the archon, and craved an audience on a subject most important to the archon himself.

"Oh! then that must certainly be the frogs," said the senator Meidias, who was with the archon at the time, and had just informed him how the nomophylax, with all his followers, had been seen to go to the temple of Latona.

"I wish all the frogs were——Latona forgive me!" exclaimed the archon; "now this sanctimonious preacher will be filling my ears with whys and wherefores, till at last I shall not know

whether I am standing on my head or my heels. Pray help me against this tiresome old pedant."

Meidias only laughed at the archon's embarrassment. "Hear all that he has to say, but hold fast to your own opinion, and remind him that necessity has no law. We cannot be all eaten up alive by the frogs, and if affairs are to go on as hitherto, the best thing that Latona could do would be to change us all into frogs together. At all events it can do no harm if your excellency gives the priest to understand that Jason also has a temple at Abdera, and that gods are only gods so far as they do good."

"Capital! capital!" said the archon; "I only wish I could put the matter to him just as you have put it to me. But I will soon collect my thoughts. You step into my study there; you will see one or two fine sketches by Parrhasius of some of our ballet-girls—by the bye, you need not say anything about that to my wife."

Meidias went into the study, and the priest was introduced.

"I come to your excellency to give you a good piece of advice, because I have a high opinion of your wisdom, and would willingly save you from inconvenience."

"I thank you, most reverend friend, for both:

good counsel always finds good reception. What is that you offer me?"

"The senate," proceeded Stilbon, "has passed, as I understand, a very rash decree——'

"Reverend sir!——"

"I do not mean to say," continued the priest, "that this has been done knowingly: men err, for the most part, simply for want of knowing. Here I bring your excellency a book from which you may learn all the history and philosophy of our frogs. It has cost me much toil and many sleepless nights. You will see from these pages that the academy, which is a thing of yesterday, can have no right to decide a question which is as old as the divinity of Latona. Frogs in Abdera are quite different things, as we all ought to know, from frogs in any other part of the world. They belong to Latona, and are undying witnesses and living documents of her godhead. It is unreasonable to say that there can be too many of them, and sacrilege to discuss means whereby their number may be diminished."

"Sacrilege, my lord high-priest?"

"I should ill deserve to be a priest at all if I allowed such things as this to pass in silence; for if we once admit that the number of frogs

may be diminished, what is to hinder our less pious posterity from rooting them out altogether? As I have already said, your excellency will find in this book all that is to be believed on the subject. See to it that an abstract be made, and that every family be furnished with a copy of it. If this be done, then the safest thing will be to say no more about the matter at all. As to the academy, the whole realm of Nature lies open before them; they may discuss from elephants to wood-lice, from eagles to mosquitos, from whales to tittlebats—everything, in fact, except—frogs!"

"Reverend sir," answered the archon, "Heaven preserve me from inquiring into the mysteries of our frogs! I am archon in order to keep everything in Abdera as I found it; but you see we cannot stir for the frogs, and we really must get rid of the inconvenience. We cannot be worse off than we are—that your reverence must see as well as I do. Our forefathers were contented with keeping up the holy pool, and if any one chose to have a frog-trench of his own—why, he was free to do so. All this was reasonable enough, and we should have let well alone; but now that we are in a positive danger of being eaten up alive by the frogs, I beg

your reverence to be so good as to tell us what we are to do, for to me it seems small comfort, if one is devoured by frogs, to know that they are very uncommon frogs that do it. In one word, the academy shall give their opinion, because the senate has demanded it of them; and, with all due respect to your reverence, I will *not* read your book. We will have the matter settled, once for all, whether the people of Abdera are here on account of the frogs, or the frogs on account of the people; for as soon as the republic comes in peril through the frogs, it becomes at once an affair of state, and the priests of Latona have nothing more to do with it, as you know perfectly well. Necessity has no law. In short, reverend sir, we won't be devoured by the frogs. If, however, you should insist on our being so—which I hope you will not—you must then pardon me, if I remind you that the temple of Latona is not the only one in Abdera; and the golden fleece, the guardianship of which is committed to my family by the gods, may, perhaps, after all, be potent enough to assist Abdera out of all her difficulties. I will not say more—only remember, my lord priest, the pitcher goes often to the water, but gets broken at last."

The worthy Stilbon could hardly tell whether

he were sleeping or waking when he heard the archon, whom he had always regarded as a very well-meaning and exemplary governor, express himself in a speech so objectionable. He stood for a while with his mouth open, in perfect silence, not because he had nothing to say—far from it—but because he had so much to say that he really did not know where to begin.

"I could never have believed it possible," at last he began, "that I should live to see the day when a high-priest of Latona could hear such words from an archon of Abdera as I have just listened to!"

The archon, at these words, began to feel a little uneasy, for, as he did not rightly know what it was that he had said, he was rather apprehensive that he might have said more than he intended—more, in fact, than was quite seemly. He looked with a perplexed eye towards the study-door, as though he would gladly have called Meidias out to help him; as, however, there was an absolute necessity that in this case he should help himself, he rubbed his forehead, blew his nose, twitched his beard, fidgeted, and at last answered the priest with the best words he could put together in his agitation,—"I really do not know how to

understand what you have just said; you must have entirely misunderstood me. You are a very learned man, and I have all possible respect for you and your office——"

"Then will you read my book?" interrupted Stilbon.

"Why, no, not exactly; but if you think that it is absolutely necessary——"

"I press that which is good upon nobody," replied the priest at last, with more warmth than he was perhaps aware of; "I will leave it with you—read it or not. The worse will it be for you if it be a matter of indifference whether you judge rightly or wrongly."

"My lord priest," rejoined the archon, who was beginning to get a little warm too, "you are not without a temper, I see. I can easily understand that you have the frogs very much at heart, for it is on their account that you are high-priest; but you must at the same time remember that I am archon over Abdera, and not over a frog-marsh. In your temple rule as you like, but let us rule in the senate as seems best to us. The academy shall send in their report, that I give you my word upon; but I also assure you that before the senate takes any active steps in consequence, the report shall be laid before you."

The high-priest concealed his dissatisfaction at the result of his unsuccessful visit as well as he could, made his bow, and retired. The archon had assured him that the rights of Latona's temple were as sacred in his eyes as those of the senate and the aristocracy of Abdera, and with this assurance he was obliged to be content. It was something that he parted on polite terms at least.

"There! that has put me rather in a heat," said the archon to the senator Meidias, wiping his forehead with his handkerchief.

"You have behaved yourself most resolutely," said the senator. "The priest will be as mischievous as he can, only he is fighting with a wooden sword. You have only to refuse all attention to his distinctions and syllogisms, and he is beaten at once, and does not know where he is."

"Yes, unless he has the nomophylax behind his back. I wish I had not compromised myself quite so far. But what a proposition that I should read the thick book that the erudite old dotard has more than half blinded himself with writing!—who could listen patiently to such a notion?"

"Do not trouble yourself about that or any-

thing else. We have the academy with us, and in a few days all the laughers in Abdera will be on our side. I will scatter songs and poems among the people; Silex, the ballad-maker, shall weave the Lycian frog-peasants into a rhyme which shall split the sides of the people with laughter. We must make those gentlemen ridiculous with their frogs;—it must be neatly done, but we must have stroke upon stroke, ballad on ballad, and you will soon see how my remedy will act."

"I heartily wish it," said the archon. "You can hardly understand what mischief these wretched frogs have done this summer in my garden—I can no longer put up with the annoyance. We only want now a dry year, and then we shall have an army of field-mice and moles for our further comfort."

"First let us get rid of the frogs; as to the mice and moles, it will be time enough to take measures about them when they are really come."

"But what the plague," said the archon, "am I to do with his thick book?—surely *you* would not advise me to read it."

"Jason and Medea forbid! Let your Excellency give it to me, and I will take it to my

cousin Korax, who will no doubt draw up the resolution of the academy. He will make good use of it, I'll be bound for that."

"There may be a great deal of good matter in it," said the archon.

"If it be good for nothing else," answered the senator, "we will make it into powder, and give it to the rats which, as your Excellency says, are coming. I dare say it will make excellent rats-bane."

CHAPTER VI.

What the high-priest Stilbon did when he reached home.

The first thing that the high-priest did, on arriving at his cell, was to sit down before his work on the antiquities of Latona's temple, with the intention of reperusing with great care the chapter on the frogs, which was the longest in the book, and certainly, as at least he flattered himself, the best; and this he intended to do with all the impartiality of a judge who had no other interest in the thing than the discovery of truth. For, however confident he was of the result of his examination, he yet held it reasonable and necessary that he should again go over his whole system and arguments, so as to prove them once more from point to point, that, after this new, accurate, and sharp inquiry, he might

the better be able to defend his theory against the mistaken views and fashionable philosophy of his time.

Poor Stilbon! If thou wert, as I would rather believe than not, an honest man, what a deceitful thing had thy reason become! and what a slippery misleading serpent is that great enchantress, self-love!

Stilbon read through his chapter on the frogs with all the impartiality of which he was capable; proved every fact, every evidence, every syllogism, with the cool deliberation of an Arcesilaus; and concluded that men must either lay aside all pretension to common sense, or admit the truth of his system. "You say that cannot possibly be; pardon me, it can very possibly be, for it has happened, and still happens almost every day."

Nothing was more natural. The good man loved his system as well as his own flesh and blood. He had generated it himself—it was both wife and child to him, and far dearer than all those worldly luxuries, honours, and joys, which he by his entrance into Latona's temple had renounced for ever. In truth, it was to him beyond all other enjoyments.

As he seated himself to prove once more the

accuracy of his system, he was equally convinced of its truth and beauty as he was of his own existence. It came just as naturally to him as if he had been examining, with all the composure in the world, whether the snow on the summit of Hæmus was white or black.

"That the Milesian peasants who forbade the thirsty Latona to drink from their pool, were changed into frogs, is a fact," said he; "that a number of these frogs, as tradition has described, were removed and placed in the pond situated in the grove of Latona in Abdera, is a fact also. Both facts are grounded on that whereon all historical truth is grounded, human belief in human testimony; and as long as Abdera has existed no reasonable man has ever dared to call in question the universal belief of the Abderites in these facts, because he who should deny them would be obliged to prove their impossibility; and what man living can do that? But whether the frogs which at the present time are found in the sacred ponds are precisely the same as those which, having been men, Latona, or, what is the same thing, Jupiter at Latona's request, had changed into frogs,—on this point there are several opinions. Our learned men have most of them maintained that the support of the

sacred ponds is a mere institution of our ancestors, who had decreed that frogs should be kept therein, as a remembrance, or as a symbol of the power, of our tutelary goddess. The common people have always believed in the frogs, and spoken of them as if they were the identical ones produced by the well-known miracle. And I, Stilbon, by the grace of Jupiter and Latona high-priest of Abdera, have, after mature consideration, concluded that this belief of the people is supported by irrefragable evidence; and here is my demonstration."

The condescending reader would find himself probably but poorly edified were we to give him the detailed argument as propounded in the aforesaid book of the high-priest Stilbon, especially as we are all as fully persuaded of its groundlessness as the honest Stilbon was of its truth. We shall therefore content ourselves with remarking that the whole system hinged upon an hypothesis common enough now, but, then, and at Abdera, new, and which Stilbon believed he had originated himself, viz. that all generation consisted in the development of original germs.

Stilbon found this discovery so glorious, and supported it on so many moral and logical

grounds (physical research was not his forte), that day by day it appeared to him more unanswerable. At length he believed that he had brought it to the highest point of probability. Now, as from this to certainty is only one point, what wonder was it that an hypothesis so reasonable, so subtle, so probable, and which, moreover, he had originated himself, worked out with so much labour, and brought into a close and necessary connection with all his other ideas, and then had made the basis of a new and philosophical theory on the frogs of Latona, should at last appear to him as certain, obvious, and irrefutable, as any proposition in Euclid?

"When the Milesian peasants were changed," said Stilbon, "they contained within themselves the germs of all peasants or non-peasants who might have proceeded from them to this day, or even to the end of time, in the ordinary course of nature. Now, at the moment when the aforesaid Milesian peasants became frogs, these germs must have been changed from human germs into frog-germs; for," said he, "either these germs must have been annihilated, or they must have remained as they were, or they must have *ranified*, or, in other words, frog-i-fied. The first supposition is untenable, for it is as impossible for

nothing to proceed from something as for anything to proceed out of nothing; the second hypothesis is equally unsound, for in that case the Milesian *ἀνθρωποβάτραχοι*, or men-frogs, have been continually the parents of real men, which is not only contrary to the facts of history, but is in all ways unreasonable. There remains, therefore, only the third doctrine, that these germs were ranified, that is, changed into frog-germs; and we may, therefore, with perfect accuracy state, that the frogs which at that time were found in the holy pool, and all those whose descent can be fairly traced to these, and consequently the frogs in Abdera now in question, are certainly the same as those metamorphosed by Latona, inasmuch as they existed in their germs in the miraculously-changed peasants, and, by one and the same act of divine power, were changed with them."

Taking these principles, then, as proved, the consequences which followed from them were as clear as daylight. "Just as an oak struck by lightning," said Stilbon, "is regarded as a sacred thing, and henceforth belonging and consecrated to Jove the Thunderer, and is looked upon with shuddering awe, so ought we to contemplate the frogs which have been so changed from men

by Jupiter or Latona, even to the thousandth or ten-thousandth descent—to consider them as a race apart, standing between frogs and men as a wonderful creation of Latona; and as such to be treated and honoured. Outwardly, indeed, they are frogs just as others, and yet they are not so, for by birth and nature they were men, and all that birth and nature gives must be of an indelible character. Hence they are not so much to be looked on as frogs as to be regarded in the light of frog-men, and, in a certain sense, of our own species—our brethren, but our unhappy brethren, marked, as a warning to us, with the unmistakable stamp of the divine wrath, and therefore deserving of our tenderest pity." Nor did he stop here: "Not only is our pity due to them, but our reverence also, for they are enduring and undeniable evidences of the power of our goddess,—evidences which no man may attack without attacking the goddess herself; for their preservation through so many centuries is a proof that she has willed that they should be preserved."

The good high-priest, a man whom our readers may perhaps look upon as wholly contemptible, but who would not so appear to them if they could place themselves in his exact position, had

spent the whole evening in reading over and over his chapter on the frogs, reflecting seriously upon it, and endeavouring to strengthen his system on the firmest ground. So deeply had he meditated that his senses were perfectly bewildered, and he had entirely forgotten that the nomophylax had requested information of his reception by the archon, and that he had promised to give it; nor did it at all occur to his mind till in the twilight he heard his cell-door open, and the nomophylax, in his own person, stood before him.

"I have nothing very consoling to repeat to you," said Stilbon. "We are even in worse hands than I had foreseen. The archon refused to read my book, perhaps because he cannot read at all."

"I would not be too sure of that," replied Hypsiboas.

"And he spoke in such a tone as could never have been expected from the head of the republic."

"And what did he say?"

"I thank Heaven that I have forgotten the greater part of what he did say. He maintained that the academy must give its opinion——"

"That we must agree to," struck in the

nomophylax, "and the Anti-froggites will perhaps find more opposition than they look for. But lest they should accuse us of going to work violently before we had tried milder means, the minority is resolved to make without delay a written representation to the senate, in case Latona's clergy are disposed to make common cause with us."

"Willingly," said Stilbon; "I will at once draw up the document myself. I will also——"

"In the first place," replied the nomophylax, "a short memorial which I have already, *sub spe rati et grati*, sketched out, will be sufficient. We must reserve so learned a pen as yours for the last resource."

The high-priest allowed his plans to be overruled, but nevertheless thought he would get something done previously; so he set himself to compose during the night a small tractate, wherein he placed his system of the frogs in an entirely new light, and in a much more elegant manner than it appeared in his book on the antiquities of Latona's temple, and refuted, as he went on, all objections which the philosopher Korax might possibly raise. "Foreseen arrows are so much the less hurtful," said he to himself. "I will make the argument so intelligible

that it shall be plain to the meanest capacity. It must indeed be a sad day for all that is good and right, if truth has lost her power over the human understanding exactly in this particular case."

CHAPTER VII.

Extracts from the opinion of the academy.—A word concerning the intentions of Korax thereupon, with an apology in which Stilbon and Korax may equally share.

DURING the progress of all these movements on the part of the minority of the senate and Latona's priests, the academy had received an order to lay before the senate, within the space of seven days, an opinion as to what reasonable means could be adopted (saving the rights of Latona) to diminish the enormous and increasing number of frogs.

The academy did not fail to assemble on the following morning, and as the Anti-froggites formed a considerable majority, it was unanimously resolved that the "opinion" should be drawn up by Korax, a special caution being given him by the president, not by any objec-

tionable treatment of the subject to involve the academy in a dispute with the priests of Latona.

Korax promised to exercise all his wisdom so as to express the truth in the most inoffensive manner possible; "but to the impossible," he continued, "as the honourable gentlemen knew, no one could be bound."

"Quite right," replied the president; "my suggestion merely went as far as possibility."

"That is what I always say," reiterated Korax.

"Into what a paradoxical position is an honourable man thrown, if he has the misfortune of being an Abderite!" said Korax to himself, while preparing to place on paper the opinion required. "In what other city on earth would such a question have been intruded upon an academy of sciences? But it is well that the senate has so much understanding as to ask the academy at all; there are States where even so much wisdom as this would not be found, and we must confess that the Abderites sometimes, in their marvellous simplicity, hit upon a good expedient."

Korax sat at his writing-desk, and worked with so much zeal that he was prepared before sunset with the opinion.

As we have given a sufficiently detailed account of the system which the high-priest Stilbon had constructed, that impartiality which it is the first duty of an historian to practise requires of us that we should give at least as much of the academical opinion as may be necessary for the complete understanding of this remarkable history.

"The high senate," said the preface to the opinion, "in its honourable decree directed to the academy lays before that body the representation, that the frog-population in Abdera exceeds the human population in an enormous and immeasurable proportion, and thereby spares the academy the unpleasant task of proving what, as a universally-known fact, lies before the eyes of every observer. It therefore claims the consideration of the academy, while it endeavours, under these circumstances, to devise a remedy whereby this disorder and nuisance may be removed or alleviated.

"But the frogs in Abdera, as a very long established institution connected with the faith of our forefathers, have acquired rights, to disturb them in which would seem to many dangerous, and to some absolutely criminal. Since, then, by the nature of the case, the only available means

which might be suggested by the academy for the advantage of the commonwealth, would seem like an open attack on the Abderite religion, by assailing the real or pretended rights of the Abderite frogs, it will be serviceable, and indeed indispensable, to lay before the senate an examination into the actual condition of the aforesaid frogs.

"The academy begs also the close attention of the right honourable members of the senate to this theoretical portion of its most respectful and submissive opinion, as the happy result of a discussion so deeply interesting to the whole community depends mainly on the correct views taken of the preliminary question, whether, and how far, the frogs of Abdera are to be considered in the light of mere frogs, or otherwise."

This examination occupied more than two-thirds of the whole opinion.

The sly philosopher, mindful of what he had promised to the far-sighted president, related the transformation of the Milesian peasants only by the way, and with all that respect which is due to an old popular tradition. He considered it, with reference to the book of the high-priest on the antiquities of Latona's temple, as a thing no more to be doubted than the transformation

of a Narcissus into a flower, or a Cygnus into a swan, or a Daphne into a laurel, or any other transformation which rests on such strong ground; for if it were not inadmissible or unbecoming to doubt such venerable legends, it was at least unwise. On one side it was impossible to invalidate its authenticity, through historical testimony, and on the other no naturalist in the world was in a position to prove its absolute impossibility; and thus every wise man would the more willingly abstain from expressing a doubt, inasmuch as there was nothing more to say against it than the common-place observations, "It is incredible," "It is against the course of nature," and similar phrases which would occur to the shallowest minds. He looked upon the transformation of the Milesian peasant into a frog as a matter resting on its own evidence, but asserted that its truth or falsehood had really nothing to do with the question of the senate. There was probably no one who would deny that this Milesian frog-man had been dead and out of the way for at least two thousand years; and even if it were allowed that the Abderite frogs traced their descent from the same, this only proved that, from time immemorial, from father to son, they had been

true and genuine frogs; for, from the time that the Milesian peasants had been frogified they had ceased to be men, and consequently from that moment forward could have had no power to continue any other race than that which was now become their own, *i. e.* true and genuine frogs. In a word, frogs were frogs; and the circumstance that their early primogeniture had been transmuted from Milesian peasants militated just as little against their present froggish nature as the fact that a beggar whose ancestors for two-and-thirty descents had been born beggars could ultimately trace his lineage to Ninus or Semiramis, would entitle him to claim the station and respect due to a prince. The supporters of the contrary opinion seemed to be so far convinced of this truth themselves, that they grounded their views of the higher nature of the Abderite frogs on a theory which needed no other refutation than to be fairly expressed.

The penetrating reader—and it is understood that a work like this can have no other—will immediately, without our reminding him, have remarked that Korax, by this introduction, came upon the system of the high-priest Stilbon concerning the occult germs, and which it was necessary for him, before he could venture on

any explanation of his plan for reducing the number of frogs, to succeed in either refuting or rendering contemptible. Now, as of these two methods the last was at the same time the most convenient, and most suitable to the capacities of the high and wise dignitaries with whom he had to do, Korax satisfied himself, through a comical account of the indefinite littleness of pretended germs, to show the unreasonable character of the hypothesis.

"We will," said he, "not to fatigue the attention of the senate with unnecessary calculations, assume that the son of the biggest and fattest of the frog-changed peasants had, in this imaginary germ-state, the relation in point of magnitude to his father, of one to ten millions. We will assume this for the sake of round numbers, although it might be proved, without much trouble, that the germ would be at least ten times smaller than I have supposed. Now there must be in this germ, according to the priest Stilbon's view of the case, the germ of the next descendant, and in this that of the following, and so on to the ten-thousandth; and in each case the germ must be ten million times smaller than in the foregoing. Let us now suppose that we have only the thirtieth generation of

frogs, and we shall see that the germ of such a one, at the time of the change of his ancestor, must have been so many million times smaller than a cheese-mite; that, if the right honourable senate of Abdera would set the quickest writer they could find to set down the sum which would express this proportion, he would not have finished his task in less than two hundred years, and the whole realm of this excellent republic would scarcely find room for the paper which should contain the calculation. The academy leaves to the consideration of the senate whether the minutest of all minute animals be minute enough to give any idea of the unspeakable littleness of the germ, and whether it is not possible that some human and pardonable infirmity on the part of the most reverend high-priest may have clouded for a time his intellect when he invented the before-named hypothesis, an hypothesis which, after all, gives but a feeble support to the sacredness of the Abderite frogs.

"The academy has used its best endeavours not to tax too greatly the imagination of the senate. But when we come to consider how short the natural life of a frog is, and that the present generation must be at least the fifteen-hundreth from that into which the Milesian pea-

sants were changed, it will be evident that the theory of the most reverend high-priest must before now be lost in an abyss of littleness such as is really frightful to contemplate. 'Nature is,' as the celebrated inscription at Lais declares, 'all that is, all that has been, and all that shall be; and no mortal has hitherto lifted up her veil.' The academy, deeply impressed with the importance of this great truth, is far from desirous of making any unwarrantable inquiry into mysteries which must and will remain ever inexplicable. We consider that it would be in vain to attempt to learn more of the mode of existence of organized beings than the external senses reveal to an attentive observer; and if we hold it allowable for the natural curiosity of the human mind to support by hypotheses its desire of comprehending all things, we do at the same time consider those the most laudable which hold that by the hidden powers of Nature the germs of organized bodies are developed exactly when Nature herself has most need of them. According to this mode of explanation the germ of each now living and croaking creature, in all the marshes and frog-ditches in Abdera, is no older than the period of its immediate generation, and it has no other connection

with those who lived and croaked at the time of the Trojan war, from whom it has nevertheless descended in a right line, than that it is the production of the same Nature, brought forth in the same way, endued with the same qualities, and created with the same intention."

The philosopher Korax, after these copious elucidations, came at last to the following conclusions:—That the Abderite frogs were just as true, natural, and genuine frogs, as any other in the world; and that the peculiar privileges which they enjoyed in that city did not depend upon any peculiarity in their nature, or on any effect produced by the change of men into frogs, but only on a popular belief which, to the great detriment of the republic, had been too long allowed to remain unexamined. Favoured by this notion, the imagination of some persons, and the self-seeking of others, had made out of those frogs a kind of nuisance, the like of which, out of Egypt, the whole world could not exhibit.

"The antiquities of Abdera," he proceeded, "lie, notwithstanding all the light which the venerable and learned Stilbon has so abundantly shed over them, like the antiquities of all other cities in the world,—in that mist of impenetrability which leaves the curious inquirer about

their truth without any hope of ever seeing his desire satisfied.

"But what need have we to know more than we know already? What to us is the origin of Latona's temple and its holy frog-ponds? and what if we knew its whole history? Would Latona be more or less a goddess, her temple more or less a temple, and her frog-ponds more or less frog-ponds?

"Latona must and shall be worshipped in her very ancient temple, and her frogs must and shall be kept up in their holy ponds with due reverence. Both these things were instituted by our earliest forefathers; both are honourable for their antiquity, both are strengthened by the custom of many centuries, sanctified by the laws of our republic, which has confided the care of them to colleges duly instituted for that purpose.

"But if Latona, or Jupiter for the sake of Latona, did change the Milesian peasants into frogs, does it follow that all the frogs of Latona are sacred and entitled to all the sacerdotal privileges of personal inviolability? And if our wise ancestors thought it well to hand down these wonders to perpetual remembrance by maintaining a small frog-pond within the circum-

ference of Latona's temple, does it therefore follow that all Abdera must be changed into a frog-pool? The academy well knows the esteem in which certain opinions and feelings among the people are to be held; but the superstitions in which they are fond of indulging cannot be respected when overstepping reasonable boundaries. Frogs may be held in honour, but to sacrifice men to frogs is unreasonable. The design with which the Abderites our forefathers established the sacred trenches, would be accomplished by the retention of a single frog, though, even if a whole pondful were preserved in one place, still, by the curtailment of their numbers elsewhere, Abdera would not be the less flourishing, powerful, or happy.

"But the singular proposition, that we cannot have too many frogs and frog-moats, has brought us to such a condition that now no other choice remains to us, but either to disburden ourselves immediately of the over-load, or to repair bare-headed and bare-footed to Latona's temple, and with earnest entreaties remain near the shrine of the goddess till she repeats her ancient miracle, and changes us, as many as remain of us, into frogs too.

"The academy most reverentially submits

to the wisdom and patriotism of the right honourable senate, that it would be casting a reflection upon their statesmanship, could the academy doubt for a moment that the means of relieving the people from their present evils will be immediately adopted; this means has all the conditions required by the senate, it goes direct to the point, is immediate in its operation, is not attended with any expense, but will be rather an economy, and neither Latona nor her clergy will have any right to resent it."

And now let the friendly reader guess what this might be: it was, without dwelling long upon conjecture, the most simple in the world. It has always been adopted without any objection in France, and indeed throughout Christendom; but yet, when proposed in Abdera, the hair of half the senators stood on end. In one word, the means proposed to the Abderites in order to release themselves from the supernumerary frogs, was—to eat them!

The proposer of this measure affirmed that on his journey to Athens and Megara, in Corinth, in Arcadia, and a hundred other places, he found that the legs of frogs were commonly eaten, and that he had actually eaten them

himself. He protested that they were wholesome, nutritious, and pleasant food, whether eaten baked, salted, or boiled, fricasseed, or brought to table in small patties.

He calculated that by this means the frog population in a short time would be reduced to very moderate dimensions, and the labouring and middle classes would find in their times of famine no small relief from this new kind of eatable; and, although the number would thus from day to day be diminished, their departure would be compensated in the destruction of a thousand frog-moats turned to other and more productive purposes, by which the said ground, forming at least a fourth part of Abdera, would be properly cultivated, to the great advantage of the inhabitants.

The academy, he added, had viewed the affair from all possible points, and could not perceive how, on the part of Latona and her priests, any objection could arise. So far as the goddess herself was concerned, she must feel much injured through the bare suspicion that the frogs were to her more agreeable than the well-being of the Abderites themselves. From the priests it was to be expected that they were far too good citizens and patriots to reject

a proposal so well calculated to remove one of the greatest evils of Abdera by turning a matter of great inconvenience into one of great utility. But it was only reasonable that they, through their good feelings towards the republic, should not be themselves injured; the academy therefore proposed not only that the inviolableness of the ancient frog-trenches of the temple should be guaranteed, but that, from the moment the legs of frogs should be recognized as lawful food, a tax of two or three oboli on every quart of them should be paid to Latona's temple,—a levy which, at a moderate calculation, would in a short time produce from thirty to forty thousand drachmas, to the great advantage of the temple, which would in every respect be held free from injury.

At length the philosopher Korax concluded his "opinion" with the following remarkable words:—"The academy believes that, through the proposal of this plan, so imperatively called for and yet so generally useful, it has accomplished the task imposed on it; it is at ease with regard to the result, inasmuch as it is only so far concerned in it as the rest of the people of Abdera. But as it is convinced that the frog-worshippers may set themselves in opposi-

tion to the fulfilment of this plan, so it ventures to express a hope that the fathers of the republic will not allow so ridiculous a sect to gain the upper hand, and, before the eyes of the Greeks and barbarians, stain the name of the Abderite republic with a disgrace which no lapse of time will ever be able to efface."

The writer of this work confesses that, in the present state of European opinion about frogs, we are hardly qualified to give an impartial judgment. As to Korax, whatever may be said about his morality, it is quite certain that his passions were as much concerned in the controversy as those of Stilbon; and he was a great deal too anxious to increase the number of his followers to escape the suspicion that the vanity of becoming the head of a party had, at all events, as much to do with his zeal as the love of truth. Perhaps, also, the desire of obtaining a victory over Stilbon, and of securing a distinguished place in the annals of the republic, was not without influence in the mind of the philosopher. But that all his proceedings were dictated by mere greediness, we hold to be a calumny of idle, self-interested, and ill-conditioned people, of whom, in such circumstances, and especially in small republics, there is never any lack.

Korax had taken measures that his opinion should be unanimously approved at the second meeting of the academy, for the president and two or three honorary members, who were not quite prepared to agree with him, had actually taken a journey out of the country.

CHAPTER VIII.

The opinion is read in the senate, and after several weighty debates, it is resolved that it be communicated to the clergy of the temple of Latona.

THE opinion was within the prescribed time handed to the archon, and at the next sitting of the senate was read, *ore rotundo*, by the town-clerk Pyrops, a declared opponent of the frog theory, and with unusual attention to all his stops.

The minority had nevertheless made great interest with the academy to delay the execution of the plan, and in an extraordinary session had secured a majority in questioning whether the recommendation of the academy ought to be carried out without the sanction of the college of the Ten.

Onocradias had also taken time to consider this proposition, but, notwithstanding the daily

solicitations of the opposite party, he had hitherto deferred to reply, as he knew that the opinion would be ready for the next ordinary day of sitting. The nomophylax Hypsiboas, and his party, also found themselves not a little offended when, after the usual business was finished, the archon drew out a great roll from under his mantle, and informed the senate that this was the opinion of the academy, which, in consequence of a decree passed at the last meeting of the senate, they had been commanded to furnish with respect to the troublesome affair of the frogs.

They all rose impetuously at once, accused the archon of having gone cunningly to work, and declared that they would not consent to the reading of the opinion.

Onocradias, who, amongst other little failings, was always warm when he should be cool, and cool when he should be warm, had intended to give a very vehement answer, if the counsellor Meidias had not entreated him to be quiet till the gentlemen had left off. "When this is all done," he whispered, "they will have nothing more to say, and then they must cease"—which was exactly what took place.

The gentlemen quarrelled, bullied, and gesti-

culated, until they were tired, but at last, observing that no one attended to them, they sat down again, growling, wiped the perspiration from their foreheads, and the opinion was read. We know the temper of the Abderites, turning so quickly from tragedy to comedy, and losing sight of the gravest side of a question on the smallest occasion for laughter. Scarcely was a third part of the opinion read when their gay humour displayed itself.

"That I call proof," said one of the senators to his neighbour as Pyrops ceased reading for a moment to take a pinch of snuff.

"We must confess," said another, "that the thing is written in a masterly style."

"I should like to see," said a third, "what could be said against the argument that frogs are in fact only frogs."

"I have long remarked as much," observed a fourth, with a sly wink, "but it is very agreeable to have the opinion of learned men coincide with our own."

"Proceed, Mr. Town-clerk," said Meidias, "for the end must surely soon come."

Pyrops continued to read aloud. The senators laughed till their sides ached over the calcula-

tion of the smallest of germs of the priest Stilbon; but they became serious once more when the sorrowful alternative was proposed, and thought what a pity it would be if they all in company, with the reigning archon at their head, should approach Latona's temple and devoutly pray as a special favour to be changed into frogs.

They thought of the thick necks, and gasped for breath at the bare idea as to how such a catastrophe should be met, and from the bottom of their hearts were willing to decide that any expedient must be good by which such a misfortune could be avoided. But as the secret came fairly out,—when they heard that the academy had no other means to propose than that the frogs, which but a moment before they would have been but too glad to be rid of at any price—should be eaten, what tongue can express the mixture of astonishment, vexation, terror, and disappointed expectation, which displayed itself in the countenances of the old counsellors, who made up at least one-half of the body!

At once, being overcome by the invincible power of prejudice, they all rose in terror, declaring that they wished to hear nothing

further, and that they could not have expected such ungodliness in the academy.

"But you hear that we are only to eat common, natural frogs," exclaimed the counsellor Meidias; "do we not eat pea-fowls, pigeons, and geese, notwithstanding that they are sacred to Juno, Venus, and other divinities? Do we believe that beef is any the worse because the nymph Io was changed into a cow, or have the smallest hesitation in eating all kinds of fish, though they are under the protection of all the water-gods?"

"But the matter before us concerns neither geese nor fish, but frogs," roared out the counsellors and guildmasters all at the same moment, "which is quite another thing. Just gods! eat the frogs of Latona!—how could such an idea occur to any man of sound mind?"

"But you take the matter in a wrong light," shouted the counsellor Stentor; "would you like to be taken for frog-worshippers?"

"Better frog-worshippers than frog-eaters," replied the nomophylax, who could not resist the temptation at this lucky moment to place himself at the head of party on whose shoulders he thought it just possible that he might be lifted to the archonship.

"Better anything in the world than frog-eaters!" screamed the minority, echoed by a few grey-bearded guildmasters, whom they had added to their adherents.

"Gentlemen," said the archon Onocradias, rising with some warmth from his ivory chair, as the frog-worshippers shouted so loudly around him that he began to entertain fears for his hearing,—"gentlemen, an opinion of the academy is not a decree of the State. Do sit still, and hear reason, if you can. I hope there is no one here who imagines that I particularly care about eating frogs, but yet I see no reason why I should allow them to eat me. The academy, which is composed of the most learned men in Abdera, must certainly know what they mean when ——"

"Not always," murmured Meidias, under his breath.

"And as it concerns the common welfare, and it is not reasonable that frogs should—that is, that men should be sacrificed to frogs, as the academy has very well expressed it—so it is my opinion that the 'opinion' should be communicated without further delay to the most reverend priesthood of Latona. If any among you can point out a better mode of proceeding,

I will be the first to support it. For my part, I have nothing to say against the frogs, except that they are mischievous to the State."

As the proposal of the archon was just what both parties must at last accede to, the communication of the "opinion" was unanimously agreed upon; but, alas! quietness was not restored in the senate, and from that hour forward the poor State of Abdera found its citizens divided, only under another name, once more into Asses and Shadows.

CHAPTER IX.

The high-priest Stilbon writes a very thick book against the academy.—Nobody reads the same, and, for a while, everything remains *in statu quo.*

EVERYBODY expected that the high-priest would pour out the vials of his wrath upon the academy and its judgment—fire and flame was the least they looked for—and it certainly did call forth a good deal of astonishment that, according to appearances, he treated the whole matter as though there had never been any controversy at all.

"What poor heads!" said he, shaking his own, whilst he hastily read over the resolution; "nevertheless, I should think they must have read my book on the antiquities, in which all is so clearly laid down. It is incomprehensible how any one with fine sound sense can be so stupid, but I will thoroughly open their under-

standings; I will write another book—a book that all the academies in the world may condemn if they can."

And the high-priest sat down and wrote a book three times as thick as the first, which the archon Onocradias had refused to read; and he proved therein that the author of the "opinion" had not even common sense; that he was an ignoramus who had never learned that nothing was great and nothing was small in Nature; that matter itself was infinitely divisible; and that an endless diminution of the germ, even were it carried ten times further than Korax, in his laughably exaggerated calculation, had exhibited it, really proved nothing at all against its possibility. He supported the foundation of his system of the Abderitan frogs by new reasons, and answered with great accuracy and profuseness all possible objections made against it. His imagination and his anger became inflamed as he wrote, and unconsciously he gave vent to bitter sarcasms against his opponents, accused them of intentional misrepresentations and deep-rooted hatred of the truth, and gave them distinctly enough to understand that such men in a well-regulated city were not to be endured.

The senate of Abdera was terrified when the

archon, after some months (before which time Stilbon, although he wrote day and night, had not completed his book), brought the refutation of the high-priest before the council; it was so voluminous that it required two of the strongest porters in the city to carry it in a wheelbarrow to the great council table whereon it was laid. The honourable gentlemen soon decided that there was no possibility of reading so very circumstantial a detail. "

It was consequently, by a great majority of votes, agreed to send the work immediately to the philosopher Korax, with a commission that what could be found to object to in the book he should put in writing and report thereon, as soon as possible, to the reigning archon.

Korax stood amongst a crowd of conceited Abderitan youths in the hall of his house, as the porters with their learned burden arrived; when he heard from the council messengers what was to be done, so boisterous a shout of laughter resounded throughout the assembly that it was actually heard in the senate, some three or four streets distant.

"The priest Stilbon is a sly genius," said Korax. "He has seized the most infallible expedient not to be overcome; but he will find himself

mistaken. We will show him how to refute a book without reading it."

"Where shall we unload?" asked the porters, who had already been waiting a long time with their barrow, and understood nothing of all the facetious observations made by the learned gentleman.

"Oh!" replied Korax, "there is no room for so large a book in my small house."

"I will tell you what," said one of the young philosophers. "The book is not written to be read; let it be deposited in the council library. There it will be safe, and remain covered with dust an inch thick, unread and in good condition, to the remotest ages."

"A capital idea!" said Korax. "Good friends," he continued, approaching the porters, "here are two drachmas for your trouble: take your load to the senate library, and trouble yourselves no further about the matter,—I take the whole affair on my own responsibility."

Stilbon, from whom the destiny of a book which had cost him so much trouble could not long be concealed, hardly knew, between anger and astonishment, what to think or to do. "Great Latona!" he exclaimed, time after time, "what an age do we live in! What is

to be done with people who will not hear or read? However, so let it be: I have done my duty. I shall waste no more pens; I shall not stretch out my fingers for so ungrateful a community, and so unintellectual a people."

So thought he in his first moment of dejection, but the good priest deceived himself in this apparent tranquillity. His self-love was too deeply wounded long to remain quiet. The more he reflected on the subject, and he thought of nothing else during the whole succeeding night, the more he felt convinced that he ought not to sit silently down and remain inactive in so good a cause.

The nomophylax, and the other enemies of the archon Onocradias, failed not further to inflame his zeal by their suggestions. They held almost daily meetings to confer on the best way of proceeding, and what steps they should take to stem, as Stilbon called it, the spreading stream of confusion and profligacy. But the times had really and greatly changed. Stilbon was no Strobylus, the people knew but little of him, and he had none of those gifts whereby his predecessor, with infinitely inferior learning, had made himself so important in Abdera.

Almost all the young people of both sexes were infected with the maxims of the philosopher Korax. The greater part of the counsellors and illustrious citizens lent themselves, without seeking any better reason, to the side which furnished them with the best subjects for laughter, and even among the lowest classes the street-ballads which the adherents of Versifex and Korax chaunted everywhere about the streets, had so good an effect, that there could be no hope of raising the people to an insurrection on account of the frogs.

But, what was worst of all, there was reason to believe that even among the priests there were first one, then another, who secretly stood in connection with the Anti-froggites.

It was, indeed, more than mere suspicion that the priest Pamphagus was only waiting an opportunity to make the present state of affairs useful to his own advancement, and to remove the honourable Stilbon from a place which he, as Pamphagus gave people secretly to understand, from his entire inexperience in business, was altogether unequal to fill. Notwithstanding all this, the Froggites formed a considerable party, and Hypsiboas had skill enough always to keep them in a state of commotion, which more than

once had wellnigh burst out into a dangerous uproar; while the opposite party, satisfied with the conquest they had obtained, and disinclined to endanger their superiority, had remained inactive, and carefully avoided all occasions of unusual excitement.

They showed their inconsistency in more ways than one. They did not even care to resent the title of frog-eaters, they continued to make the frogs of Latona the common objects of their jests and sarcasms; but yet, Abderite-like, they allowed their croaking fellow-citizens to remain undisturbed in possession of the city and suburbs of Abdera, notwithstanding all the opinions of the academy and all the satire of Korax.

CHAPTER X.

Wonderful unravelling of the whole tragi-comic farce of the Abderites.

In all probability the frogs of Latona would long have revelled in this security, but unfortunately in the following summer an innumerable multitude of rats and mice of all colours invaded the unhappy republic. All the country was covered with them, and thus the perfectly innocent and unconscious prediction of the archon Onocradias was unexpectedly fulfilled.

To be eaten by both frogs and mice at once was too much for the poor Abderites: the affair was a serious one. The Anti-froggites now pressed without further delay the carrying out of the proposal of the academy.

The Froggites exclaimed that the swarm of yellow, green, blue, blood-red, and puce-coloured

mice, which in a few days had made the most direful devastation in the Abderitan fields, was a visible punishment for the profaneness of the frog-eaters, and was evidently despatched direct from Latona, entirely to destroy the city which had so impiously withdrawn itself from the protection of the goddess.

It was in vain that the academy averred that yellow, green, blue, blood-red, and puce-coloured mice, were, notwithstanding, only mice like all others of the species; that the thing was perfectly natural; that similar instances were to be found registered in the annals of all nations; and that, as the mice seemed resolved that the Abderites should have nothing else to eat, they should at least try to overcome their prejudices and to revenge themselves on the eatable portion of their common enemies, namely, the frogs.

It was to no purpose that the priest Pamphagus hit upon a proposal to use the frogs for the future as regular sacrifices, the head and intestines to be immolated to the goddess, and the legs to be consumed by the people to her honour.

The people, terrified at their public calamity, which they looked upon no otherwise than as a punishment from their irritated goddess, and

incited by the heads of the Froggites, assembled in troops before the senate-house, and threatened not to leave a whole bone among the counsellors if they did not instantly find the means of saving the town from destruction.

Good advice was never so wanted in Abdera as at this moment. The counsellors perspired from anxiety, beat their foreheads, but all was empty within; the more they pondered, the less they knew what to do.

The people refused to depart, and swore to break the necks of all, Froggites and Anti-froggites, if they came to no successful conclusion.

At length Onocradias arose, as if inspired, from his chair. "Follow me," said he to the senators, as he walked with hasty strides to the marble gallery appropriated for addresses to the people. His eyes sparkled with unusual lustre, he looked a head taller, and his whole figure assumed such a majestic appearance as none had ever before beheld in an Abderite.

The counsellors followed him in silence and full of expectation.

"Hear me, ye men of Abdera," said Onocradias, in a voice unlike his own, "Jason, my great progenitor, has descended from the throne of the gods, and suggests to me at this moment

the means whereby I can save you all. Go each to your home, pack up your furniture and utensils, together with all the money you possess, and start to-morrow morning at break of day—with your wives and children, horses and asses, oxen and sheep, in short, with bag and baggage, to Jason's temple; from thence we will obtain the Golden Fleece, and, with the sacred Palladium of the Abderites at our head, turn our backs on these walls cursed by the gods, and in the distant plains of fertile Macedonia seek other habitations till the wrath of the deities has subsided, and then we, or our children, may again be permitted to return under happier auspices to beautiful Abdera. The destructive mice, when they find nothing else to consume, will devour one another—and as to the frogs, may Latona be gracious to them! Go, my children, and get yourselves ready; to-morrow, ere sunrise, shall our distresses end."

All the people shouted with approbation at the inspired words of the archon, and at that moment breathed one mind only in all Abdera.

Their easily-excited imaginations rose up again full of flame. New prospects, new scenes of joy and happiness, danced before their mental view. The extensive plains of happy Macedonia

opened out like a fruitful paradise before their eyes. They already breathed a purer air, and longed, with indescribable impatience, to escape from the thick loathsome frog-sloughs and poisonous vapours of their native city.

All hastened to equip themselves for marching —a proceeding of which, only a few minutes previously, not one man among them had ever dreamt.

Very early the following morning all were ready to start from Abdera, leaving behind in their houses, without regret, such articles as could not be conveniently removed, so eager were they to reach a home where they would no longer be made miserable by frogs and mice.

On the fourth morning after their self-expatriation, King Cassander met them: the tramp of their host had been heard afar off, and the clouds of dust which they raised had eclipsed the daylight.

Cassander commanded his cavalcade to halt, and sent one of his attendants to inquire what was the matter.

"Sire," said the messenger on his return, "they are the Abderites, driven from their city by rats, mice, and frogs, seeking another and more-favoured land."

"If this be the case, they certainly are Abderites," said Cassander. In the mean time Onocradias appeared at the head of a deputation of senators and citizens to lay their case before the king.

The whole affair appeared so irresistibly funny to Cassander and his courtiers that, notwithstanding all their politeness, they could not keep from laughing in the faces of the Abderites, who, as they saw the whole court so tickled, held it incumbent on them to laugh too.

Cassander assured them of his protection, and pointed out a spot on the borders of Macedonia where they might remain until they could find means of coming to some reasonable arrangement with the frogs and mice of their native land.

From that time forward little more was heard of the Abderites and their transactions; yet so much is certain—that, several years after this singular emigration, the historical certainty of which is placed beyond all doubt, by the testimony of Justinus (in a fragmentary extract from the historian Trogus Pompeius) (lib. xv. c. 2), they removed back again to Abdera.

It seems probable that they left behind them in Macedonia those "bees in their bonnets,"

which had made more noise than all the rats and frogs in their city.

For from this epoch history says nothing further of them than that they, first under the protection of the Macedonian kings, and then of the Romans, passed their lives for several centuries in tranquillity; but as they were neither more ingenious, nor more stupid than other similar municipalities, they gave historical writers no occasion to talk about them at all.

To conclude, we will give the condescending reader full proof of our candour by stating that, so far as the elder Pliny and his universal authority, Varro, deserve belief, Abdera was not the only city in the world from which the inhabitants were driven by such apparently insignificant enemies as frogs and mice.

Varro not only mentions a city in Spain which was ruined by rabbits, and another demolished by moles, but also another in Gaul, the inhabitants of which, like the Abderites, were displaced by frogs! But as Pliny does not name the city which this misfortune befell, nor state from which of the innumerable works of the learned Varro he took the anecdote, we should perhaps not be wanting in the reverence due to so great

an authority, if we suggested that his memory, which sometimes appears to fail him, may have substituted one name for another, and Gallia in Thrace might be the place meant, and thus he might unconsciously be relating the history of Abdera itself.

And here we place the last stone on that monument which we have endeavoured to erect to the glory of a once-celebrated, but now almost-forgotten people. Inspired perhaps in so doing by that divinity who of old watched over their prosperity, and though this history is composed of no weightier materials than the caprices and follies of the Abderites, yet we may be allowed to hope that it may endure till our nation has arrived at that happy state when it will be no longer applicable, when such tales will neither irritate nor entertain anybody; in a word, till there are none sufficiently like to the Abderites to be offended at seeing their own image reflected in such annals, and until such adventures will be no more intelligible to us than the history of another planet.

This period cannot be far distant if only the youths of the twentieth century will be as much wiser than those of the nineteenth, as these think themselves wiser than the men of the

eighteenth, and if the books on education with which we are now so abundantly provided, do only one-tenth part of the good which their authors propose.

THE KEY TO THE ABDERITE HISTORY.

WHEN the poetry of Homer was first known to the Greeks, the people, who, in many things see more clearly with their unaided vision than learned gentlemen with eye-glasses, had understanding enough to discover that in all his great heroic fables,—in spite of the wonderful, the adventurous, and the incredible, with which his works are so richly interwoven—a nurse could find enough in them to sing her child to sleep with—that they possess much more wisdom and instruction for practical purposes than a Milesian nursery tale: and we see from the letter of Horace to Lollius, and from the use Plutarch makes, and advises others to make, of Homer, that, many ages after his time, sensible men of the world, both Greeks and Romans, have been

of opinion that more could be learned from Homer's fables than from the most subtle and eloquent sophistical doctrines, as to what was right and useful, what wrong or injurious, and how much a man may accomplish by virtue and wisdom.

It was left to old children, young ones were taught better, to adhere only to the material part of the poetry; sensible people felt and recognized the spirit which breathed through the work, and it never entered their minds to separate what was indissolubly joined together by the muse; they recognized the true under cover of the wondrous and the useful, by a kind of fusion not made known to all, united to the pleasant and the beautiful.

It was the same here, as in all human things. The learned men of modern times, not satisfied at finding in Homer's poetry warning or encouraging examples, an instructive picture of human nature in its different shades, circumstances, or scenes, endeavoured to plunge deeper, and to see more than their predecessors; and so it was discovered (as what could not be discovered, if a man will but set his mind on discovery?) that what were only intended as examples, were allegorical, and in all, even to the

machinery and decorations of the poetic theatre, there was a mystic sense; and at last, every person, every occurrence, every picture, every little fable, concealed heaven knows what mysteries, of the Hermetic, Orphic, and Magic philosophy, of which the worthy author dreamt as little, in the innocence of his heart, as did Virgil that, twelve hundred years after his death, his verses would be used to conjure up evil spirits.

In the mean time it was gradually made into an essential condition of epic poetry, as the greater and more heroic of poetical fables were called, that, besides the natural and the moral sense which lay on the surface, there must also be another meaning, hidden and allegorical—at least this whim prevailed among the Italians and the Spaniards; and it is more than ridiculous to observe what extraordinary trouble the commentators, and even the poets themselves sometimes took to spin out from an Amadis, or an Orlando, from Trissino's Liberated Italy, from the Lusiad of Camoens, or even from the Adone of Marino, all sorts of metaphysical, political, moral, physical, and theological allegories. As it was not thought the reader's business to penetrate in his own might into all these mysteries, so it became necessary to give him the exposi-

tion of the allegoric or mystic sense; although the author seldom thought, before his work was finished, of the concealed likenesses and allusions that might be cunningly drawn therefrom.

What was done by many authors in compliance with the reigning fashion, to which they dared not oppose themselves, became to others the real aim and principal business of their works. The celebrated Zodiacus vitæ of the so-called Palingenius, Barclay's Argenis, Spenser's Fairy Queen, the new Atlantis of Mrs. Manly, the Malabar Princess, The Tale of a Tub, the Story of John Bull, and many works of the same kind, in which the sixteeenth and seventeenth centuries were so fertile, were, from their nature and purpose, allegorical, and could not be understood without a key, although several of them—for instance, Spenser's Fairy Queen, and the allegorical scenes of Dean Swift—are so constructed that any sensible person on perusal could find the key without assistance.

This short deduction will be sufficient to make those who never before thought about it comprehend how it happens that, in the majority of minds, a common opinion has imperceptibly arisen, that every book bearing any likeness to a

satirical romance, must be inspired with a hidden sense, and consequently require a key.

The editor of the present story, being aware that the greater part of his readers are persuaded that something lies at the bottom beyond what the words at first sight seem to imply, and consequently are requiring a key to the Abderite history, regarding it as an absolute necessity for understanding this interesting work, is not surprised at the desire so frequently expressed; on the contrary, he feels himself bound to satisfy them in this present complete and enlarged edition, and to present them with a key—or rather, instead of the required key, what is the same thing, to communicate to them all that can be useful or necessary to the proper understanding of a book written for the pleasure of all people of sense, and for a lesson and punishment to all fools.

To this effect, he finds it necessary to communicate to them, above all things, the origin of the story in the unadulterated and genuine words of the author, a writer who, though but little known, has been very much read since the year 1753.

"It was," so says the narrative, "on a fine autumn evening, in the year 177–, that I was

alone in the upper floor of my residence, and looked—for I am not ashamed to confess my share in any human infirmity—a long while out of window. For many weeks before my genius had altogether left me; I could neither think nor read. All the fire of my spirit seemed to be extinct; and all my imagination, like volatile salts, to have evaporated. I was stupid—but ah! without sharing in the bliss of stupidity, without possessing a single grain of self-satisfaction, that unshaken conviction which assures certain people that all which they think, say, dream, or talk about in their sleep is true, witty, wise, and deserving to be engraved on marble. A persuasion which makes the true son of the great goddess easily recognizable, and feel himself the happiest of mankind; in short, I *felt* my situation, and it laid heavily upon me; I struggled against it in vain, and it went so far with me that I stared at the people through a tolerably uncomfortable window, without knowing what I was looking at, or seeing anything that was worth the sight. At once I felt as if I heard a voice, whether a reality or delusion I shall not decide, but it said to me, 'Sit down and write the history of the Abderites.' A sudden light broke in upon me,—'Yes! yes!' cried I, 'the

Abderites! what can be more natural! 'I *will* write the history of the Abderites. How could it have happened that so natural an idea did not occur to me long ago?' and then I sat down and wrote, and looked for facts, and compiled, and arranged, and wrote again, and it was a pleasure to see how rapidly the work advanced in my hands.

"As I was in the best humour for writing," continues our author, in his most sincere confession, "I seized, in a moment of caprice, the idea of letting loose my imagination, and pushing the thing as far as it would go. It concerns only the Abderites, thought I, and it is impossible to do them an injustice; they are nothing more than a set of fools, the nonsense with which history loads them is great enough to excuse everything attributed to them, however inconceivable. I confess this openly, and if I am wrong, may Heaven pardon me! I endeavoured to raise my imagination to the utmost, in order to make the Abderites think, speak, and act as foolishly as possible. 'More than 2000 years are gone by since they were all dead and buried,' said I to myself; 'and it cannot do any harm to them, or their descendants, of whom not a relic remains that I know of.' To all this came another suggestion, which

gained on me by an appearance of sincerity. 'The more absurd I make them,' thought I, 'the less have I to fear that "The Abderites" should be taken for a satire on other people of whom I have no knowledge;' but I was mistaken in this conclusion, as the result has shown that I have unconsciously painted portraits, when I was only exercising my imagination."

It must be confessed that it was the worst misfortune that could have befallen an author who had no guile in his heart, and never wished to vex his fellow-creatures, but only to amuse himself and them, and drive away *ennui*. Nevertheless this is what befell the author in his very first chapter.

There is no town in Germany, nor within the natural limits of the German language, which is spoken, by the bye, over a larger extent of country than any other European tongue can boast, where "the Abderites" have not met with readers; and, wherever it has been read, the descriptions it contains have been received as portraits, of which everybody had seen the originals in a thousand places where, says the author, "I had never been, and where I had not the slightest acquaintance; it was a matter of astonishment how I could know so much of the

Abderitish men and women, and customs which were to be found in Abdera; and it was thought that I had either a secret correspondence, or a familiar spirit who furnished me with anecdotes which I could not learn in a proper way. I knew," he continued, "that I had neither the one nor the other, consequently it was clear as day that the ancient race of Abdera was not so entirely extinct as I had imagined."

This discovery induced the author to make inquiries, which he deemed unnecessary as long as in writing his work he referred more to his imagination and humour than to chronicles and history. However, he searched through many small and large volumes without effect, but at last found, in the sixth decade of the renowned "Hafen Hawkenbergius, P.M. 864," the following passage, which unexpectedly afforded him an explanation of these phenomena.

"The good town of Abdera, in Thrace," says Hawkenbergius in the above-mentioned passage, "formerly a large, populous, and commercial place —the Thracian Athens—the birthplace of Protagorus and Democritus, the paradise of fools and frogs. This good and beautiful town of Abdera exists no longer! In vain we seek for it in the maps or descriptions of Thrace, even the site

whereon it stood is unknown, or can only be pointed out from conjecture. But it is not so with the Abderites; they live and move still (although their primitive habitation has long since disappeared from the face of the earth), undestroyed and immortal, they are found everywhere, without enjoying a settled site; and, although scattered among the nations, they remain, to the present day, pure, unmixed, and faithful to their original Abderitan fashions and manners; so with an Abderite, wherever found, it is only necessary to look at him and listen to him for a moment to be certain that he is one —just as a Jew is recognized in Frankfort, Leipsic, Constantinople, or Aleppo, as soon as he is seen. But what is a very extraordinary thing, and a circumstance in which they differ from the Jews, the Bedouins, the Armenians, and all other unmixed nations, is, that without the least danger to their Abderitism, they mingle with the other inhabitants of the earth; and, notwithstanding that they speak everywhere the language of the country in which they live, acknowledge in common the constitutions, religion, and customs of the non-Abderites, eat and drink, walk and act, dress and adorn themselves, curl and perfume their hair, purge and physic themselves; and, in

short, perform everything that is necessary in human life—just like others, they, I say, notwithstanding this, remain like to themselves only, in all that constitutes them Abderites, just as if from remotest time they had been separated from the sensible beings of our planet by a diamond wall, thrice as high and thick as the walls of Babylon.

"All other samples of mankind change by transplantation, and the mixture of two varieties produce a third but with Abderites, wheresoever they have transplanted, and howsoever they have mixed with other people, no change has ever been noticed. They are still the same fools they were two thousand years before in Abdera; and although after so long a period it cannot be said, look here, or look there, for Abdera, there is not a market-town, village, or hamlet throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, or America where some members of this scattered society are not to be found!" So much from the above-mentioned "Hafen Hawkenbergius."

"After having read this passage," continues our author, "I discovered at once the key to those before-mentioned experiences, which appeared to me at the first glance so incomprehensible, and so well did the relation of Hawkenber-

gius render intelligible to me what had occurred with the Abderites, that I was confirmed in the belief of their present existence. Thus, the Abderites left a progeny which spread itself into all countries, and had numerous descendants, and as the character and adventures of the ancient Abderites have been preserved in anecdotes and pictures, so the identity of the modern ones has been proved by their strange quality of uniformity and immutability—differing in this respect, according to the above authority, from all other inhabitants of the Continents and the Isles.

"This intelligence, received from all quarters, is a great consolation to me, on two grounds: first, I was freed from the self-reproach of having imputed too much folly to the Abderites; and secondly, I learned that my work was read with pleasure, even by the Abderites themselves, and that especially the striking likeness between the old and new ones very much surprised them, and was regarded by them as a flattering proof of the authenticity of their descent. The few who complained that they were painted too true to nature, could be little considered by the multitude who were satisfied; and, perhaps, even those few would do better if they took the

thing otherwise; because, since, as it seems, they are unwilling to be taken for what they are, and for that reason have put themselves into the skin of a noble animal—prudence would require them not to stick out their ears so as to be remarked, which cannot be to their advantage.

"On the other side, I was glad that circumstances arose to remind me that I was writing the history of the old Abderites, almost under the eyes of the new ones—as it kept in check my imagination (which at the commencement had been left to ramble much at its own will), and caused me carefully to avoid all caricature, and, finally, to render strict justice to the Abderites in all I have said of them. I look upon myself as the historian of the antiquities of a flourishing family, which would be entitled to take it very ill if I imputed anything unjustly to their predecessors."

The history of the Abderites may be taken as one of the truest and surest, and as a faithful mirror, wherein the modern ones may look at their own faces, and, with a little honesty, discover distinctly how far they are like their ancestors. Many words would be useless to prove the great utility of this work as long as Ab-

derites exist, which will undoubtedly be for ages yet to come.

It will also be of occasional service, in making the descendants of old Germans among us more careful to avoid everything which could give rise to suspicion that they were of Abderite blood, or endeavouring to acquire a likeness to this people, and may cure such persons of admiring Abderitan manners and arts; or falling into an imitation of them, by which they on their part have little to gain.

This, worthy reader, is the promised key to this remarkable and original work, to which I give you the additional assurance, that you have not a single drawer which you could not open therewith. Should anybody whisper in your ear that something more is concealed, you may safely believe either that he does not understand what he is talking about, or that he means no good.

SAPIENTIA PRIMA EST
STULTITIA CARUISSE.

NOTE ON

PHILOSOPHICAL ROMANCE,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

PHILOSOPHICAL ROMANCE.

THE History of Prose Romance is a very curious one. It is not a very ancient form of composition; we had long and philosophical histories, essays on all imaginable subjects, formal treatises, and regular biographies, before it seemed to occur to any writer, that prose was even a fitter vehicle than verse for a fictitious narrative. It did not impose the same rules, nor require the same dignity. It allowed the colloquial style for conversation, the poetical for description, the historical for narrative; and it permitted all these to be changed at the author's pleasure. It is, therefore, somewhat strange that we have no prose romances of the time of Pericles. It might have been an agreeable change for an Athenian critic, at any period during the supremacy of that glorious city in art, science, and literature, to have passed from

the examination of a play by Aristophanes, an oration by Demosthenes, a history by Thucydides, an ode by Pindar, or a new edition of any such productions, to the glittering pages of an Athenian Walter Scott, or what would have been more probable, an Athenian Bulwer Lytton. However, none such have descended to our times, and the romance, as we apply the term, did not dawn upon society till long after every other species of composition had reached its perfection. It seems probable that the first notion of the romance arose from a feeling that the interests of morality might be served by it—not that the first fictitious narratives are remarkable for their high moral tone, far from it, but that nothing is more likely to have occurred to the earliest moralists. "History is Philosophy teaching by examples," says an ancient adage; but History cannot choose her examples, she is obliged to take them as they come, and record their fates as they occur. She cannot make a prosperous tyrant an instance of poetical justice; she cannot raise a poor and virtuous peasant to a throne; she makes the most of what she has, but her teaching is often widely different from that which the moralist might desire. Now, if fiction be permitted, all this difficulty may be

got over at once; all the virtues and all the vices may be displayed without hindrance; the one may be rewarded, and the other punished; and the reader may lay down the volume with the comfortable sensation that all the personages it describes have received their deserts, and the only drawback to his enjoyment will be the consciousness that no such results are to be found in "real life."

The next step was to make romance special. Romances of love were, of course, the earliest of this species; romances of chivalry followed after a long interval; and lastly came the novel, which is peculiarly a production of our own times, and in which life is represented, or meant to be represented, even as in a mirror.

But before this, and, indeed, long before any regular narrative was attempted in fiction, there arose a form of composition, which, for want of a better title, has been called the Philosophical Romance. The object of this was the development of some theory, chiefly of morals or politics, and it has happened, fortunately for the success of this species of writing, that it has fallen into the hands of some of the most illustrious of mankind. Despairing of being able to influence the age in which they lived, so as

to gain a trial for their plans, such men as Plato, More, and Bacon, returned to their studies, and there drew up the scheme of an imaginary commonwealth, in which virtue might be more effectually encouraged and practised, and vice and crime more effectually repressed, than was found to be the case in the existing governments of the world. The example which they gave in literature has been followed, and as the number of their imitators increased, so at the same time the sphere of their observation enlarged, and the experience of modern times was pressed into the service of politico-philosophical romance.

Two changes deserve notice: one is, that the more modern the romance, the more it takes the form of the romance proper—it is a narrative of adventures, the hero enlists our sympathies on behalf of himself, and adorns the narrative with all the charms of perilous escape, glorious achievement, and passionate feelings. Who can help contrasting the story of Gulliver or Zanoni with the dry detail and impersonal character of Plato's *Republic*, or More's *Utopia*?

Another change is still more remarkable,—the earlier romances are all eminently constructive—they exhibit in action what the author

wished to recommend. They show his notion of a perfect government, a faultless system of morals, or an infallible philosophy. The consequence of this is, that the reader, unless very philosophically inclined, is but little interested; he feels that he is reading a political or a moral treatise, and in his own mind treats it as such; for its impersonal heroes he has no sympathy, and the very perfection of its arrangements removes at once all anxiety and nearly all interest.

Modern philosophical romances are eminently destructive; they display, not the perfections which ought to exist, but the faults which do: they exhibit tyranny, corruption, oppression, folly, arrogance, ruin, and they aim at bringing the errors of actual governments before the world by making manifest their effects in imaginary cases—such are *Gulliver's Travels*, and that most extraordinary of all modern works of this kind, the *History of the Abderites*, by Von Wieland, which ought to be called "The Republic of Fools."

In examining the works which have most attracted, in this direction, the attention of the world, we shall commence with the most renowned of all, THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO.

This work is the earliest example of the phi-

losophical romance; it has occasioned, we might also say included, the *Utopia* and the *Atlantis*, the *Oceana* and the *Gaudentio di Lucca*, and is greater than either or all of these. Plato speaks the language which Jupiter would speak if Jupiter spoke Greek; and not only is there this supreme power and splendour, not only the weight, the depth, the gloom, the glory, but the apt allusion, the delicate humour, the graceful repartee, the covert irony,—are all here. The lowest as well as the highest chords discourse their music—with what exquisite grace!—as the simple incidents of the opening pages glide into the serious business of the dialogue; gradually the group in the household of the kindly-hearted old Cephalus becomes, as it were, transfigured, and we are conscious of lights, and sounds, and visions that are scarcely of this world.

Yet should we draw a distinction between the higher parts of the dialogue, the metaphysical and the religious element, and its political and practical features. With the theory of the ideas, with the train of thought associated with the cave scene and the vision of Er, our present business has no concern. There are many points of view from which the *Republic* can be investigated;

and critics are still undecided as to its central idea. We shall confine ourselves to that department which includes Plato's conception of the possible constitution of a State—no mere dream of an enthusiast or theorist, but what he hoped and believed was practicable and attainable.

It is not till the middle of the second book that we arrive at anything of this description. The first book gives us the portraiture of the Sophist, and a discussion on justice. It is hard, he finds, to settle the notion of justice from an investigation into individual character. But what cannot be read in little print, may be read in large. Justice may be predicated of a State as well as of an Individual. With Plato, an individual is a State seen through a diminishing lens; a State is an individual seen through a magnifying one. Let us see what is the Justice of a Republic: we may then discern the justice of the conscious "self."

Step by step he points out the rise and progress of a State. Man cannot be isolated: self-sufficiency is a chimera. We will suppose our State only consists of four or five people at the commencement. They must all labour, and there must be a division of labour. Society is first made up of some one to till the ground,

some one to construct huts, some one to make clothes, and some one else to make shoes. By-and-by we discover the need of carpenters, smiths, shepherds, and graziers; next a foreign trade arises. Trade implies shops and a currency, ships and sailors, labourers and merchants. At this point our State is furnished with necessaries. But it will insist on also being provided with luxuries: the actor, the physician, and the poet, are all looked upon in this light; as also the barber and the tirewoman. Furthermore, it demands the dishes of Sicily, and the dancers of Corinth, and we shall now want more territory than we happen to possess; consequently we must go to war; we must have soldiers who are to be as faithful watch-dogs, a guardian class to the State.

And now Socrates—for Socrates is always the mouthpiece of Plato—gives us his theory of education. Nothing is so important as this, especially in the outset of life, when the mind is gathering shape and colour from external influences. We must not teach it the poetry of Homer; for Homer professes a popular morality, or rather no morality at all. Our children must not hear unworthy fables of the gods, nor ought anything in the character of great men,

which is mean, sensual, or ridiculous, to be brought before their notice. They must not become acquainted with the imagery of terror attached to death. They must be trained to truth, courage, and self-control. The style of speech and writing, by and to which they are to be educated, must be simple and severe, and admit very sparingly of the mimetic element. In music the Lydian and the Ionian must be discarded, as also the mixed Lydian and the hyper-Lydian; for these harmonies are either plaintive, convivial, or effeminate. But leave me, says Socrates, the Dorian and the Phrygian, —the one a high and rushing music, such as may suit a brave man in the clash of battle; and the other low and tranquil, meet for a man in a calm, prayerful, or persuasive attitude.

But our sense of the word music includes only a small part of the meaning which the Greeks attached to the term. All education was divided into music and gymnastic, and nearly everything that was not included in the one ranked under the other. This "music" is a sense of the beauty, and harmony, and proportion that ought to pervade every relation of life. To make a perfect man, both mind and body must be equally trained; but notice that the training of the body is not

for the sake of the body, but only as a means to the perfect development of the mind.

Thus, in our State we have a class of guardians, or rather two classes, guardian magistrates and guardian troops; and a third class, the class of producers. Now, compare this conception of a State with the conception of an individual — the guardian auxiliaries and the productive class in the State correspond to the rational element, the spirited element, and the concupiscent element in the individual. Thus a man is wise by virtue of the wisdom of his rational element, courageous by virtue of the courage of his spirited element, and temperate when the rational element governs with the full consent of the other two; and, finally, just when each of the three performs its proper work without meddling with that of the others. This scheme has some remarkable resemblances with the system propounded by Bishop Butler in the *Analogy* and the *Sermons*.

In the fifth book Plato propounds his famous theory of the community of women and children. For a very different view of the same idea we might compare the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes. Plato, of course, makes out his case very triumphantly, and constructs such objec-

tions as he can easily confute. There is a great deal of profound truth and wisdom in the exalted views which he takes, so unusual in his age, of the character of woman; he attributes to her as high a degree of mental influence as would Mr. Mill himself. If a woman has a turn for philosophy or war, she is to share the duties of the guardian or auxiliary, become the wife of the one or the other. Such marriages are to be arranged entirely by the State, though sanctified by religious solemnities. The children are to be separated from their parents, and brought up in a State establishment. It is only by his system of communion that Plato thinks all private interests can be merged in public interests. And when it is demanded by Adeimantus, one of the principal interlocutors in the dialogue, how far such a state of things is practicable, the answer is, that this is a consideration which does not affect the soundness of the method, or the truth of the results. He is sketching a perfect State, and all that can be asked of him is, in what way might an imperfect State attain the nearest approximation to this. To this grand result one, and only one, great fundamental change is necessary. A State can never attain its perfect development till

kings are philosophers, and philosophers are kings. The difference between the genuine and the counterfeit philosopher is this—the latter contents himself with the study of the beautiful objects around him; the former penetrates into the very essence of beauty itself. The one intellectual State is opinion, the other intellectual State is knowledge, which alone takes cognizance of real existence.

At the commencement of the sixth book the characteristics of the true philosopher are enumerated thus:—1. He must have an intense desire for this knowledge. 2. He must hate falsehood and love the truth. 3. He must despise the pleasures of the body. 4. He must not care for money. 5. He must be liberal and high-minded. 6. He must be just and gentle. 7. He must possess a quick memory and a quick apprehension. 8. His disposition must be musical, regular, and harmonious.

We are now upon the ground of the ideas, the forms or archetypes of visible objects. But to this subject belongs quite a literature of itself; it would be surpassingly difficult to display the subject adequately at all—an utter impossibility to us within so restricted limits; and a knowledge of this higher wisdom can only be

brought about by the agency of all studies that draw the mind from the sensuous to the real, from the temporal to the eternal, from the visible to the invisible. It may be interesting to give the classification of such studies. The following is the series:—1. Arithmetic. 2. Plain geometry. 3. Geometry of three dimensions. 4. Astronomy, which means here the abstract science of motion. 5. The science of harmonies. 6. Dialectic, or the science of real existence.

At this point we fall back upon the subject of the earlier books, that is, the constitution of the mind and the constitution of a polity. He gives an exhaustive division of politics; first, is the perfect State and the perfect man, an aristocracy and an aristocrat; but even this high state has a tendency to shade off into something lower.

This is timarchy, a State where the principle of honour, a principle of emulation, ambition, and recklessness largely prevails. It succeeds the former State just as we may imagine the son of a truly noble being led partly astray by other influences from the high exemplar of his father. And this timarchy slips into an oligarchy, which is defined as a State where political power resides according to a money qualification.

Here we have a parallel in common life. The ambitious man has suffered from his ambitious schemes, and his son betakes himself to the safer employment of money-making. And so the series continues, till we are at the last landed at the tyrant, the latest and the worst.

Finally, Plato resolves to expel all poets from his Republic. We might have gathered as much from the earlier books. But though Plato may expel poets from his Republic, the *Republic* remains an embodied poem in itself.

The work closes in a double apologue, with what Milton would call a "regal argument" on the eternity and blessedness of justice.

The notion of an ideal republic did not originate with Plato. Before his age, Hippodamus, the architect of the Piræus, conceived a similar plan, a hint of the nature of which we may gather from Aristotle. The difference between the two is striking, but natural. Hippodamus was an architect, and so devoted more attention to the *material* structure of the State: Plato was a philosopher, and bestowed more care upon the *spirit* by which its members should be actuated. Hippodamus divides the lands belonging to the commonwealth into three parts: the sacred, which is to be set apart for the necessi-

ties of public worship; the common, for the benefit of the soldiery; and the private, for the husbandmen. The law also he portions out into three divisions, acknowledging only three sorts of social crime—insults, damages, and death. The inhabitants of the State are separated into soldiers, artificers, and husbandmen; and the magistrates are to be elected by the free suffrages of their fellow-citizens. The imaginary commonwealth of Hippodamus is not lightly censured by Aristotle, who finds much confusion in the ideas of its author.

Then there is the Republic of Phaleas, of Chalcedon, also mentioned by Aristotle, the chief feature of which is the equalisation of all property; and lastly the curious description of a State in an unknown part of the world, given by Theopompos, of Chios, in Ælian, in 18.

Theopompos, says Ælian, gives an account of a conversation between Midas, the Phrygian, and Silenus :—

This "Silenus was the son of a nymph; and though of a nature inferior to that of the gods, yet superior to that of mortals. He informs Midas that Europe, Asia, and Libya, are islands surrounded by the sea; but declares that there is beyond the limits of the known world a continent

of infinite magnitude, inhabited by animals of wondrous bulk, and by men of twice the common height, and twice the usual term of life; that they have many and great States, and many customs contrary to ours. He declares that there are among them two very great cities, totally different from one another. The name of the one is *Machimos*, that is, 'warlike;' of the other *Eusebes*, that is, 'pious.' The inhabitants of the latter pass their days in peace, and in the midst of great plenty, without ploughs or oxen, for they have no need of agriculture, or of sowing; they are, moreover, free from disease, and live in smiles and pleasures; so little is strife known among them, and so entirely are they ruled by justice, that the gods themselves do not disdain to hold intercourse with them.

"The inhabitants of the former city, on the other hand, are most prone to war. They live constantly under arms, and are incessantly fighting and striving to reduce their neighbours into subjection; so that this one State holds sway over very many others. Its inhabitants are not less than two millions. Sometimes they die of disease, but very rarely; for, for the most part, they perish in battle, crushed by stones or beaten by clubs, for by iron they cannot be wounded.

Gold and silver they possess in such quantities, that gold is of less value among them than iron with us. It is said that once upon a time they attempted to cross the sea for the purpose of making an attack upon this part of the world, and that a thousand myriads (a million) of men penetrated as far as the Hyperboreans, but that when they learned that these were the most flourishing people in our part of the world, they despised them as leading a vile and inglorious life, and thought it not worth their while to go further."

Silenus also added this, which is much more extraordinary, viz. that—

"There is in those parts a nation called Meropes, who inhabit many and great States. In the confines of their country there is a place called Anoston, that is, the place whence there is no return. Here there is neither light nor darkness, but an obscure atmosphere pervaded by a kind of ruddy glow. Through this region flow two rivers; the one called the river of 'pleasure,' the other that of 'grief,' and on the banks of each are trees of the size of a great plane tree. Those which grow by the river of grief produce fruits of a corresponding quality; so that, if any one eat of them, for the whole of the rest of his life he weeps and mourns, till

death comes to his relief. The other trees on the banks of the river of pleasure bear fruits of a contrary nature, for he who tastes of them is relieved from all his former passions: if he has loved any one he forgets him, and gradually becomes younger and younger, and enters again upon past years, and casts aside his old age, and is restored to the vigour of youth, then to boyhood, then to infancy, and then at last expires."

The reader will at once observe that in the above passage from Ælian there is an indistinct allusion to something like a notion of the existence of America. Modern investigations have established the fact that great kingdoms existed and flourished, and died out in Peru and Mexico, long ages before the New World was discovered by Columbus, and Lord Bacon will appear to have alluded to one of this nature in his *Atlantis*.

Of the *Panchaia* of Euhemeros but little remains. He was a traveller, who, instead of furnishing to the world on his return any real and serviceable geographical information as the result of his researches, contented himself with a romantic account of an island which he pretended he had discovered somewhere, we believe in the Indian Ocean, the capital of which had

had the honour of having been the seat of the empire of Zeus when he was a mortal. Diodorus Siculus has borrowed largely from this book, and with the exception of what we find in him and Eusebius, the work of Euhemeros is now entirely lost.

From these ancient romances to those of the sixteenth century is obviously a wide leap, and one which, were it the object of the present note to give anything like a connected sketch of philosophical romance would be as obviously unjustifiable. But our limits will not allow this to be more than a *note;* and, therefore, passing over many treatises which would otherwise require consideration, and especially the "Metamorphoses" of Apuleius — a book commonly known by the name of "The Golden Ass," we shall proceed to notice, at some length, the chief philosophical romance of our own country, the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More.

"Henry the Eighth," says the author, "the unconquered King of England, a prince adorned with all the virtues that become a great monarch, having some differences of no small consequence with Charles, the most serene Prince of Castille, sent me into Flanders as his ambassador for treating and composing matters between them."

Negotiations having, for some cause or another, come, for a time, to a standstill, More went to Antwerp, and there was visited, among others, by one Peter Giles, a native of Antwerp, a man of great honour and of good rank. Through this friend he became acquainted with a most interesting personage, a native of Portugal, whose name was Raphael Hythloday, one who had borne a share in three out of the four voyages of Americus Vespucius, and was supposed to be able to tell more of unknown nations and countries than any other man alive. During the last voyage of Americus, Raphael had solicited from him the favour of being left, with three-and-twenty others, at the farthest place at which they touched, and, with five Castillians, he travelled over many countries, till—

"At last, by a strange and good fortune, he got to Ceylon, and from thence to Calicut, and then he very happily found some Portuguese ships, and so, beyond all men's expectation, he came back to his own country."

More, Giles, and Raphael, after the usual civilities and courtesies of an introduction, proceed together to More's house, and entering into the garden, and "sitting down on a green bank,

entertain one another in discourse." Raphael recounts to his listeners his doings after having been left, with his companions, by Vespucius, in New Castille. He relates the progress he made in the graces of the princes and inhabitants of the country, and tells how he visited many of their towns and cities, which he says were all happily governed and well peopled. Raphael goes on to state that the people of those parts understood both astronomy and navigation, and that he got into great favour with them by adding to their knowledge the use of the needle. His auditors listened attentively, and asked him many questions, to which he replied very willingly, "only they made no inquiries after monsters," but about the States which he described as being so well and so wisely governed.

Then follows a long digression, which, however, More tells us, was the occasion which led Raphael to speak more minutely of the government of the commonwealth of the Utopians. Peter Giles being struck with admiration at the accounts of all that Raphael had witnessed, and at his judicious remarks upon what he had seen, asks him how it was he had never entered into the service of some prince, when his learning

and knowledge of men and things would have rendered him so acceptable and so useful? Raphael answers that he saw no reason why he should enslave himself to any king whatsoever. Giles and More both reply, that that was not the object of the question, and suggest that he would be conferring benefits upon others and not enslaving himself by giving any prince the advantage of his great experience.

Raphael, however, does not appear to suppose that the benefit would be so great as they seemed to imagine, for that princes were too self-sufficient and self-willed to tolerate much advice; and he accidentally mentions that he had once been in England and had stayed some months in that country. Then follows a well-drawn and excellent character of John Morton, Cardinal, Chancellor of England, and Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom our traveller had been on intimate terms, and a very long discussion upon the subject of hanging for theft, in which Raphael assigns the cause of the great prevalence of stealing to the vast number of idle followers kept by the great men of the day; and to the enclosing so much land in different parts of the country, by those into whose hands the property of which Henry VIII. despoiled

the Church had come, after the destruction of the religious houses, and suggests the necessity of better education for the people, who, he says, are first made thieves, and then punished for being so. Raphael argues moreover, that it is not lawful, *i. e.* according to Divine law, "to take away a man's life for a little money," and holds up in imitation the example of the Polylerites, a considerable and well-governed people of Persia, among whom the thief is made to work for the public.

But as a cure for the evils which so commonly exist among men, Raphael then proceeds to make a proposal—with which we can hardly fancy that many will agree, and which we are at a loss to imagine how a man like More could have brought himself to make and to suggest—that because property is so unequally divided among mankind, it should therefore be totally annihilated. He cannot think, "that as long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, a nation can be governed either justly or happily, and he expresses his agreement with Plato, and does not wonder that he resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things." Aristotle, ages ago, and others

since his time, have written upon this subject; and in this age of the world it is surely unnecessary to argue out a matter which has been frequently discussed, or to point out to the reader how that property is an institution of God himself, and one great means which He uses for the improvement and civilization of his creatures. Raphael, however, quotes the Utopians as having a constitution, of which perfect equalization of property was one distinguishing characteristic, and declares that they are so happy a people, that after spending five years with them, he was so delighted that he would never have left them, had it not been that he desired to make known his discovery of that new world to the inhabitants of Europe. He declares them to have been a nation of so great antiquity, that "they had towns among them before these parts were so much as inhabited." They knew little of Europeans, and "called us all by a general name of the nations that lie beyond the equinoctial line;" and their chronicle mentions, that about twelve hundred years before Raphael visited them, some Romans and Egyptians being shipwrecked on their coast, having got safe to shore, spent the rest of their days among them. From them they learned

many arts with which they had been before unacquainted. More then desires to be further informed with regard to these happy people, and Raphael expresses his perfect willingness to gratify his curiosity, but suggests that his description of them is likely to occupy a considerable period of time. More, Peter, and Raphael, accordingly go and dine, and they, after dinner, having returned to the same green bank, Raphael begins the description of Utopia, and the manners and actions of its inhabitants, which occupies the second book of More's work.

The island of Utopia (the meaning of the word Utopia will be "the place which has no existence;" and its capital Amaurot, or "the invisible city," is built upon the bank of the Anider, "or river without water,") is in the form of a crescent, about two hundred miles broad at its greatest breadth. Between its horns, as it were, is a sea eleven miles broad, which spreads itself into a large bay, coasted by about five hundred miles of land. It is reported to have formed originally part of the neighbouring continent, and was formerly called Abraxa, but derives its present name from Utopus, who, having conquered the island, brought rude and uncivilized inhabitants into

a happy and flourishing condition. There are fifty-four cities in the island, all large and well built, governed by the same laws and customs, and arranged as nearly in the same manner as the ground on which they stand will allow. The capital is Amaurot, which lies near the centre of the island, on the banks of the Anider. Each city has assigned to it twenty miles of soil in its immediate neighbourhood, on which are built farm-houses, well contrived and furnished with everything for country labour. "Inhabitants are sent by turns from these cities to dwell in these farms, and no country family has fewer than forty men and women in it, besides two slaves. There is a master and mistress set over every family, and over every thirty families a magistrate. Every twenty of this family come back to the town after they have stayed two years in the country, and in their room there are other twenty sent from the town."

The reader will perceive a certain lack of sagacity in this arrangement: we can hardly imagine a State so constituted that every one, no matter what his usual trade or profession may be, is to be torn away from it, and every few years made to take his turn at the plough,

whether he like it or not. So Sir Thomas More appears to have thought, for he shortly afterwards adds :—

"But though there is every year such a shifting of the husbandmen, that none may be forced against his mind to follow that hard course of life too long, yet many among them taste such pleasure in it, that they desire leave to continue many years in it."

The produce of the soil, of course, belongs to the towns, and at harvest-time the country magistrates send to those in the towns, and tell them exactly how many hands will be required to reap, "and the number they call for being sent to them, they commonly despatch it all in one day." When they want anything in "the country" which it does not produce, they fetch it from the town, without carrying anything in exchange for it, and the magistrates of the town take care to see it given them.

The capital, Amaurot, is built upon the side of a hill, about sixty miles from the mouth of the Anider; its form is nearly square, its buildings are good, and so uniform, that a whole side of a street looks like one house. As no one possesses any property, every man may freely enter into any house whatsoever, and at the end

of every ten years the inhabitants shift their houses by lot. Every thirty families each year choose over themselves a magistrate, formerly called the syphogrant, but now the philarch, (the literal meaning of this word is "fond of ruling,"—it is not improbable that Sir Thomas More may have written *Phylarch*, the name of an officer among the Athenians, signifying "captain of a tribe,") and over every ten syphogrants, with the families subject to them, another magistrate, formerly called the tranibore, but now the archphilarch. The syphogrants are two hundred in number, and by them the prince is elected out of a list of four, named by the people of the four divisions of the city.

The prince is elected for life, subject, however, to removal upon suspicion of any design to enslave the people; the tranibores are newly chosen every year, but they are for the most part still continued in their office; all the other magistrates are only annual.

The tranibores meet the prince every third day for consultation; and to them are added two syphogrants, who are changed every day; and no Act can be passed with reference to anything that relates to the public till it has been three days debated in this council.

As a means of protection for the people against any plots on the part of the prince and the tranibores, every important measure is first sent to the syphogrants, who again communicate it to the families of their divisions, and having considered it among themselves, repeat the result to the Senate.

On very great occasions, the matter is referred to the council of the whole island. They, moreover, have a rule to debate nothing on the day when it is first proposed, in order that men may not rashly, and without due consideration for the public welfare, engage themselves too soon to a biassed opinion upon the subject in question.

With regard to dress, the same sort of clothing is worn all over the island, without any other distinction than such as is necessary for marking the difference between the two sexes, and between the married and unmarried. One great duty of the syphogrants is, to take care that no man lives in idleness, but follows his trade diligently: yet they do not work as we do, from morning till night, as if they were beasts of burden; but out of the twenty-four hours they set apart six for work, three of them before dinner; after that they dine, and interrupt their labour for

two hours, then work for the other three hours, and after that sup, and at eight o'clock, counting from noon, go to bed, and sleep eight hours.

Some there are among them, who, if they appear to give promise of proficiency in learning, are privileged from labour by the syphogrants, and allowed to apply themselves to study; and out of these are chosen their ambassadors, their priests, their tranibores, and the prince himself, who was anciently called their Barzenes, but now their Athemus.

Each family is governed by its patriarch, and all the males descended from him live in the same house in obedience to him. Every city is divided into four parts, and in the middle of every part is the market-place, where each day all manufactures are laid out, and every father of a family goes thither and supplies himself, without any payment or any exchange, with whatever he may require for the necessities of himself or of those belonging to him. Moreover, each town has four hospitals, built without the walls, which are the first served with provisions, and whatever else they may require, from the market-places; this done, the common dining-halls are served, in which all eat together,

the elder with the younger, in order that the levity of the latter may be restrained within proper bounds.

If a man desire to travel over the country, he must obtain a passport from the prince which certifies the license for travelling, and limits the time of the traveller's absence, the voyager carrying no provisions of any kind with him, but being treated everywhere in every way as if he were at home.

In their great council held at Amaurot every year, to which there are three delegates sent from every town, they inquire the state of each city with regard to provisions, and any one that may chance to be in want is supplied by the others. When the wants of the whole country are supplied, and they have taken care to lay up stores for two years in case of any disaster, they then export the overplus to other countries. One-seventh of this they give to the poor of the countries to which they send, the rest they exchange for iron, gold, and silver; and with the treasure which they thus gain, they are wont in times of war to hire foreign soldiers, whom they are more willing to expose to danger than their own people. They have much gold and silver, upon which, however, they set so little.

value that they make of the precious metals fetters and chains for their slaves, and adapt them in other ways to the lowest purposes. Pearls they find on their own coasts, diamonds and carbuncles in their own country, but they use them only for playthings for their own children; and Raphael relates the impression made upon the Utopians during his stay among them by the appearance of the ambassadors of the Anemolians, who, having come arrayed in cloth of gold, and adorned with massive chains, ear-rings, and rings of gold, found themselves, to their great astonishment, looked upon as slaves, and treated with no reverence at all.

With respect to their learning, though they had never heard the names of our great philosophers, yet they had made the same discoveries that the Greeks had, both in music, logic, arithmetic, and geometry. They understood astronomy, but care nothing for astrology, or, as Sir Thomas More terms it, "The cheat of divining by the stars, and by their oppositions or conjunctions." As for moral philosophy, they seem to have the same disputes among them that we have here, and they incline to place the happiness of men chiefly, if not entirely, in pleasure. With regard to religion, they believe that the

soul is immortal, and that God, of his goodness, has designed that it should be happy; that He has, therefore, appointed rewards for good and virtuous actions, and punishments for vice, to be distributed after this life.

The treatment of their sick will put the reader in mind of something that he may have met with in Sir John Maundeville. As long as there is any hope of recovery, everything is done which can possibly tend to increase the comfort and to promote the health of the patient. In the contrary case, the priests and magistrates come and exhort the sick, that since they are now unable to go on with the business of life, and are become a burden to themselves and to all about them, so that they have really outlived themselves, they would choose rather to die at once. Such as are wrought up by these kind persuasions, either starve themselves to death, or take opium; if, however, they prefer to outlive themselves still longer, they receive just as much care and attention as ever.

The Utopians appear also to be remarkable for chastity. Some curious, and we should call them most indelicate, customs seem to prevail among them, which are found under another form in Lord Bacon's "Atlantis;" nor will the

bridegroom accept his bride until he has first satisfied himself, as Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," tells us that Francis Sforza, Duke of Milan, did with regard to her whom he is about to marry. In the matter of divorce, the regulations of these islanders will remind the reader of Milton's notions, to which they are very similar, for they allow those who do not agree well together to separate by mutual consent, and to find out other persons with whom they may hope to live more happily.

It is not a little curious to find Sir Thomas More, himself a lawyer, banishing lawyers from his "happy republic," as "a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise facts as well as to pervert laws." In his *beau ideal* of what a State should be, every man pleads his own cause, and leaves the issue to the judge. They have but a very small code, and every one is skilled in it; it is but a short study, and the plainest meaning of which the words are capable is always the proper sense. So just are they, that many of those who live in their vicinity have come to them and desired that they would send magistrates among them to be their governors; and this they have done, changing some of them every year, and some of them

every five years. Such States as have come with such a request, they call *neighbours*; those whom they have more particularly assisted they call friends. War they detest as a very brutal thing; but they daily accustom themselves to military exercises, and train up even their women, too, in order that in cases of necessity they may not be quite useless in such seasons; and their only design in ever engaging in war is:—

"To obtain that by force which, if it had been granted to them in time, would have prevented the war; or, if that cannot be done, to take so severe a revenge upon those who have injured them, that they may be terrified from doing the like in all time coming."

Their method of carrying on war, however, is about the most atrocious that can well be conceived. They cause large placards to be affixed in all the public places in their enemy's country, in which they offer large rewards to such as will kill the prince, and they double the sum to him that, instead of killing him, shall deliver him alive into their hands; and Raphael adds, that "the rewards which the Utopians offer are so unmeasurably great, that there is no sort of crime to which men cannot be drawn by them." If this method does not succeed, they try to sow

the seeds of contention among their enemies, or animate the king's brother, or some of the nobility, to aspire to the crown. If contention arise, they assist their party plentifully enough with money, but very sparingly with any auxiliary troops, "for they are so tender of their own people, that they would not willingly exchange one of them with the prince of their enemy's country." We have before said that they employ, to a great extent, mercenary soldiers, and these are drawn chiefly from the nation of the Zapolites, which lies five hundred miles eastward of Utopia. This is a rude, fierce, wild people, who are always willing to fight for the highest bidders; and as the Utopians can afford to pay higher than any others, the Zapolites are ready to serve them against any people whatever. And certainly, in this matter, More's republicans hardly show to much advantage, for he specially says, that "they are not at all troubled how many of them soever happen to be killed," for they—

"Reckon it a service done to mankind if they could be the means to deliver the world from such a lewd and vicious sort of people, that seem to have run together as to the drain of human nature."

"There are several sorts of religion, not only in different parts of the island, but even in every town; some worshipping the sun, others the moon or one of the planets. Some worship such men as have been eminent in former times for virtue or glory, not only as ordinary deities, but as the supreme God; yet the greater and wiser sort of them worship none of these, but adore one eternal, invisible, infinite, and incomprehensible Deity; as a being that is far above all our apprehensions; that is spread over the whole universe, not by bulk, but by power and virtue; Him they call the Father of all, and acknowledge that the beginnings, the increase, the progress, the vicissitudes, and the end of all things come only from Him; nor do they offer divine honours to any but to Him alone. And, indeed, though they differ concerning other things, yet all agree in this, that they think there is one Supreme Being who made and governs the world, whom they call, in the language of their country, Mithras. They differ in this, that one thinks the God whom *he* worships is this Supreme Being, and another thinks that *his* idol is that God; but they all agree in one principle—that, whatever this Supreme Being is, is also that great Essence to

whose glory and majesty all honours are ascribed by the consent of all nations."

Raphael, however, is a Christian, and when he made known the doctrines of the religion which he professed, "It is not to be imagined," he says, "how inclined they were to receive it." The law amongst the Utopians with reference to this matter, which law was made by Utopus himself, is that of universal toleration; the only severe statutes which they possess upon the subject being directed wholly and solely against atheists. Such men they look upon as unfit even for human society. They do not punish them, but they never advance them to any honours and dignities, or employ them in any public trust, and they despise them as men of base and ignoble minds. A calm and happy death they look upon as an evidence of goodness and acceptance with God; an uneasy and unwilling death they, on the contrary, look upon with horror; the former they celebrate with hymns of joy, and with many glad ceremonies; the latter they remember only with sorrow, and pray to God that He will be merciful to the errors of the departed soul: they have, moreover, hermits among them, but they do not appear to be held in very great esteem.

The priests are few in number—thirteen in every town, one for each temple in it. They are chosen by the people, and are consecrated by the college of priests. They have the care of all sacred things, and the worship of God, and an inspection into the manners of the people are committed to them; and the punishment of all others most dreaded by the Utopians, is that of excommunication by the priest.

The education of the young also forms a part of their duty. They have magnificent temples, but no images are found in them. The first and last day of every month and year are festivals. On the last day they assemble in the temples and thank God for their good success during the year or month just ended, and the next day meet again to pray for a blessing upon their affairs during the year or month just begun. On these occasions all differences are made up between those who have been at enmity, for they believe they cannot offer their sacrifices acceptably so long as they are conscious of any hatred or angry feeling in their hearts. The people present themselves in the temple in white garments, the priests in parti-coloured vestments. The service consists of prayers, and hymns, and praises, and thanks-

givings, very much after the fashion of our own services, and concludes with a petition that, if such a wish may be entertained without derogating from His supreme authority, God will see fit to take them both easily and soon to Himself.

And thus concludes the description of "The Happy Republic," of which More observes in his own person, that "though he cannot agree in everything, yet there are many things in the Commonwealth of Utopia that he rather wishes than hopes to see followed in our Government," which words seem to bear out Bishop Burnet in his opinion, that the author "intended to set many notions in his reader's way, and that he might not seem too much in earnest, he went so far out all roads to do it the less suspected." There is much, to use Burnet's expression, of "rough and fierce philosophy;" in some parts of the work there is cruelty and some immorality. There is a great want, too, of the interest which Plato excites in his philosophical dialogues, as well by his glowing language as by the greater dramatic action which he introduces. In fact, in these respects, but in no others, the *Utopia* is probably not equal to the *New Atlantis* of Lord Bacon.

Yet this important work derives still further importance from the fact that Sir Thomas More not only depicts what he considers should be the condition of a great and free country by his descriptions of Utopia, but he frequently speaks directly of his own, and many of his observations will be held as applicable in some parts of our land even now, as they were in the days of Henry VIII. Take, for instance, what he says about sheep-farms. It is said that in the single reign of Henry VIII., "seventy thousand thieves, great and small, suffered death for their crimes" —at all events, the English, at that time, were universally regarded as the most thievish nation in Europe.

"'But,' says Raphael, 'I do not think that this necessity of stealing arises only from hence; there is another cause of it that is more peculiar to England.' 'What is that?' said the cardinal. 'The increase of pasture,' said I, 'by which your sheep, that are naturally mild, and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men, and unpeople not only villages, but towns; for wherever it is found that the sheep of any soil yield a softer and richer wool than ordinary, there the nobility and gentry, and even those holy men the abbots, not contented with the old rents which their

farms yielded, nor thinking it enough that they, living at their ease, do no good to the public, resolve to do it hurt instead of good. They stop the course of agriculture, inclose grounds, and destroy houses and towns, reserving only the churches, that they may lodge their sheep in them; and as if forests and parks had swallowed up too little soil, those worthy countrymen turn the best inhabited places into solitudes, for when any insatiable wretch, who is a plague to his country, resolves to inclose many thousand acres of ground, the owners, as well as tenants, turned out of their possessions by tricks, or by main force, or being wearied out with ill-usage, they are forced to sell them. So those miserable people, both men and women, married and unmarried, old and young, with their poor but numerous families (since country business requires many hands), are all forced to change their seats, not knowing whither to go; and they must sell for almost nothing their household stuff, which could not bring them much money, even though they might stay for a buyer. When that little money is at an end, for it will soon be spent, what is left for them to do, but either to steal, and so be hanged (God knows how justly!), or to go and beg? And if

they do this they are put in prison as idle vagabonds, whereas they would willingly work, but can find none that will hire them; for there is no more occasion for country labour to which they have been bred, when there is no arable ground left. One shepherd can look after a flock which will stock an extent of ground that would require many hands if it were to be ploughed and reaped. This likewise raises the price of corn in many places. The price of wool is also risen, that the poor people, who were wont to make cloth, are no more able to buy it, and this likewise makes many of them idle; for since the increase of pasture, God has punished the avarice of the owners by a rot among the sheep, which has destroyed vast numbers of them, but had been more justly laid upon the owners themselves. But suppose the sheep should increase ever so much, their price is not likely to fall, since, though they cannot be called a monopoly, because they are not engrossed by one person, yet they are in so few hands, and these are so rich, that as they are not pressed to sell them sooner than they have a mind to it, so they never do till they have raised the price as high as is possible. And on the same account it is that the other kinds of cattle are so dear; and so

much the more, because that many villages being pulled down, and all country labour being much neglected, there are none to look after the breeding of them. The rich do not heed cattle as they do sheep, but buy them lean, and at low prices, and, after they have fattened them on their grounds, they sell them again at high rates. And I do not think that all the inconveniences that this will produce are yet observed, for as they sell the cattle dear, so if they are consumed faster than the breeding countries from which they are brought can afford them, then the stock must decrease, and this must needs end in a great scarcity; and by these means, this, your island, that seemed, as to this particular, the happiest in the world, will suffer much by the cursed avarice of a few persons; besides that, the raising the price of corn makes all people lessen their families as much as they can; and what can those who are dismissed by them do but either beg or rob?'"

We quote the following as a very curious specimen of the table-talk of Sir Thomas More's guests, and as showing the liberties which were not unfrequently taken with the clergy:—

"I do not know whether it be worth the while to tell what followed, for it was very ridi-

culous; but I shall venture at it, for as it is not foreign to this matter, so some good use may be made of it. There was a jester standing by that counterfeited the fool so naturally that he seemed to be really one. The jests which he offered were so cold and dull, that we laughed more at him than at them, yet sometimes he said as it were by chance some that were not unpleasant, so as to justify the old proverb, 'that he who throws the dice often will sometimes have a lucky hit.' When one of the company had said that I had taken care of the thieves, and the cardinal had taken care of the vagabonds, so that there remained nothing but that some public provision might be made for the poor, whom sickness or old age had disabled from labour, 'Leave that to me,' said the fool, 'and I shall take care of them, for there is no sort of people whose sight I abhor more, having been so often vexed with them and their sad complaints; but, as dolefully soever as they have told their tale to me, they could never prevail so far as to draw one penny of money from me; for either I had no mind to give them anything, or, when I had a mind to it, I had nothing to give them; and they now know me so well, that they will not

lose their labour on me, but let me pass without giving me any trouble, because they hope for nothing from me, no more, in faith, than if I were a priest. But I would have a law made for sending all these beggars to monasteries—the men to the Benedictines to be lay brothers, and the women to be nuns.'

"The cardinal smiled, and approved of the jest; but the rest liked it in earnest. There was a divine present who, though he was a grave, morose man, yet he was so pleased with the reflection that was made on the priests and monks that he began to play with the fool, and said to him, 'This will not deliver you from all beggars, except you take care of us friars.' 'That is already done,' answered the fool; 'for the cardinal has provided for you by what he proposed for the restraining vagabonds, and setting them to work; for I know no vagabonds like you.' This was well entertained by the whole company, who, looking at the cardinal, perceived that he was not ill-pleased at it, only the friar himself was so bit, as may be easily imagined, and fell out in such a passion that he could not forbear railing at the fool, and calling him knave, slanderer, backbiter, and son of per-

dition, and cited some dreadful threatenings out of the Scriptures against him. Now the jester thought he was in his element, and laid about him freely. He said, 'Good friar, be not angry, for it is written, In patience possess your soul.' The friar answered (for I shall give you his own words), 'I am not angry, you hangman; at least I do not sin in it. For the Psalmist says, Be ye angry and sin not.' Upon this the cardinal admonished him gently, and wished him to govern his passions. 'No, my lord,' said he, 'I speak not but from a good zeal, which I ought to have, for holy men have a good zeal, as it is said, The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up. And we sing in our church, that those who mocked Elisha as he went up to the house of God felt the effects of his zeal, which that mocker, that rogue, that scoundrel, will perhaps feel.' 'You do this, perhaps, with a good intention,' said the cardinal, 'but in my opinion it were wiser in you, not to say better of you, not to engage in so ridiculous a contest with a fool.' 'No, my lord,' answered he, 'that was not wisely done; for Solomon, the wisest of men, said, Answer a fool according to his folly, which I now do, and show him the ditch into which he will

fall, if he is not aware of it; for if the many mockers of Elisha, who was but one bald man, felt the effects of his zeal, what will become of one mocker of so many friars, among whom there are so many bald men? We have likewise a bull by which all that jeer us are excommunicated.' When the cardinal saw that there was no end of this matter, he made a sign to the fool to withdraw, and turned the discourse another way. And soon after he rose from the table, and, dismissing us, he went to hear causes."

From the specimens which have been given, the reader will probably regard the *Utopia* rather as a literary curiosity than as a work of much practical value. It is inartistic in construction, ungraceful in style, and reflects more credit on its author for having dared to speak so plainly to a prince like Henry VIII., than for any genius displayed in the work itself.

The limits of this note will not permit any examination of the *Nova Atlantis* of Lord Bacon, which may be considered as a copy, and not a very successful one, of the *Utopia*. It closes the chapter of what may be called *constructive* romances. Of the prose satire—for so, notwithstanding its narrative form, the more

modern political romance may be denominated —the two most illustrious examples are Dean Swift's "Travels of Captain Lemuel Gulliver," and that which in these volumes is presented to the reader.

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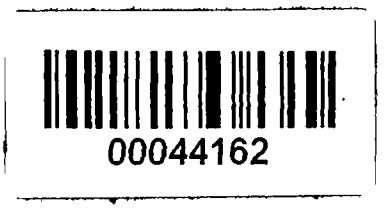
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